

LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

DUKE OF BRITTANY

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LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

THE DUKE OF BRITTANY

LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Translated from the German by
GEORGE P. UPTON

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THE DUKE OF BRITTANY	

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ARTHUR'S rescue of the Jew

LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

THE DUKE OF BRITTANY

*Translated from the German of
Henriette Jeanrenaud*

BY

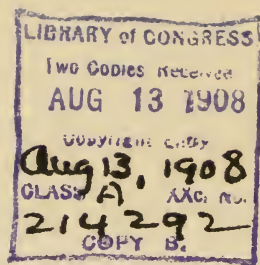
GEORGE P. UPTON

Translator of "Memories," etc.

WITH TWO ILLUSTRATIONS



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Translator's Preface

“THE DUKE OF BRITTANY” is the story of the brief but eventful career of Arthur, son of Geoffrey Plantagenet and Constance of Brittany. Geoffrey was the fourth son of Henry the Second of England and Eleanor, Duchess of Guienne. Upon the death of his brother Henry, Richard, surnamed the Lion-hearted, became the heir apparent and succeeded to the throne after the death of his father in 1189. Richard shortly afterward became one of the leaders of the Third Crusade, which ended disastrously. After being taken prisoner in Austria by Duke Leopold he was ransomed and returned to England, where he suppressed the rebellion of his brother John. He then invaded France to punish Philip the Second, John's ally, but was mortally wounded while besieging the fortress of Chalus, near Limoges. On Richard's death, John, surnamed Lackland, ascended the throne, ignoring the rightful claim



TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE



of Duke Arthur, Geoffrey's son. Almost his first act was the murder of Arthur, who, with the encouragement of Philip Augustus of France, was prepared to defend his claim as the son of an elder brother. By John's foul deed England lost its French fiefs.

The story turns upon the events in Arthur's short life, his young days in Brittany, the violent death of his father, the relations of his mother to Philip of France, the boy's love for his uncle Richard, his service in the field with Philip, his espousal to Marie of France, the war with John, his capture and assassination by the latter. The incidental characters are the Jew Abraham of Paris, Earl Salisbury, the valiant knight Höel of Mordant and his son Alan, between whom and Arthur existed a beautiful friendship. Many of the scenes are of thrilling dramatic interest, particularly the one in which the crafty and malicious Queen Eleanor refrained from blinding Arthur only because of his resemblance to his father, her favorite son; the assassination on shipboard; and the accusation of King John by Alan. Some of the historical data in the story

 TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

are not accurate in minor details, but in general the tale follows the versions of the historical authorities. It is a fascinating picture of two lovable, high-minded, chivalrous youths, worthy the study of the youths of to-day.

G. P. U.

CHICAGO, 1908.

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The Duke of Brittany

Chapter I

The Hunt

NEAR the close of the twelfth century a hunting-castle stood in the northern part of Brittany, in the midst of dense forests. It belonged to Geoffrey Plantagenet, Duke of Brittany,¹ and his banner was flying from one of its towers, for the master had come for a great hunt. His wife Constance and her ladies accompanied him, though he was very reluctant to have her come into that wild region ; but Constance would not be separated from her husband, and feared neither the solitude of the gloomy forest nor the fierce storms which occasionally swept over them from the adjacent shores. Brittany was her home. Her father, the last of the independent dukes, ruled the eastern part of it, and she brought it as her heritage to her husband, son of King Henry the Second

¹ Geoffrey was born September 23, 1158, and died August 19, 1186. He married Constance of Brittany.



THE DUKE OF BRITTANY



of England.¹ West Brittany, which was English, had come into Geoffrey's possession, before this time, from his father, and the two divisions were consolidated by him into one dukedom. Constance loved the country, and gladly visited this remote hunting-castle.

On the second evening after her arrival, Constance found herself alone with her attendants, for the Duke and the nobles, who were taking part in the chase, had ridden to the forest at early morning light with their retinues.

There were but few guests, for many an old house had lost its brave master, and many a strong castle stood empty. Many of the stoutest vassals had been drafted into the service of the English king, and others had fallen in the French wars. The country was impoverished and well-nigh deserted; the Duke was no longer powerful enough to protect it from marauding hordes and the ravages of wild animals. He had come at this time not only to indulge in the pleasures of the chase, but to restrain these pillagers as far as possible.

¹ Henry II was the first king of England of the house of Plantagenet. Outside of England he possessed Normandy and the suzerainty of Brittany, which he inherited from the Norman kings; Anjou and Maine from his father, and by marriage with Eleanor, Poitou, Guienne, and Gascony.

THE HUNT

The Duchess and her ladies impatiently paced the high stone terrace of the castle, stopping now and then to scan the forest, in whose gloom the road by which the hunters entered was soon lost. As the sun disappeared behind the dense mass of trees the Duchess eagerly listened for the first peal of the horns announcing the return. But as the sun sank still lower and the darkness grew more intense, no peal sounded from the forest. The wind rustled the banner above her, then suddenly ceased, and an ominous silence followed. After a few minutes the neigh of a horse was heard in the distance.

“Do you hear that?” joyfully exclaimed the Duchess to her ladies. “It is thus my husband’s faithful steed always announces its approach to the castle. We shall soon hear the signal of the horn, summoning us to make ready for them. Come, let us go to meet the Duke in the hall.”

Followed by her ladies, who cast parting and anxious glances at the forest, the Duchess hastened inside, ascended the steep, winding stairs, and entered the large reception hall, brilliantly illuminated by torches, where the remaining inmates of the castle assembled, among them the chaplain in his black vestments. Uttering the greeting, “Peace be with

you," he took his place near the Duchess, the others arranging themselves in a circle around the walls. The warder, with his heavy bunch of keys in his leathern girdle, went out to the courtyard, prepared to open the outer gate, which was protected by the drawbridge, when the hunting-party arrived.

At that instant the horn signal was sounded ; but what a mournful tone they heard ! All were astonished, and anxiously looked at the Duchess, who advanced toward the door with pallid face. Once again the horn sounded a piercingly mournful call, and through the outer gate, which the warder had opened, they saw the party advancing.

A squire was in the advance, leading the Duke's horse by the bridle. When she saw the horse was riderless, the Duchess pressed her hand to her heart but retained her composure ; for, if her husband was injured and needed her care, she must be courageous. The next to enter the courtyard were the Duke's followers. With slow and measured step they carried a covered bier, and silently placed it in the entrance to the hall. Behind them pressed knights and hunters, on foot and horse, and much confusion prevailed.

Constance seemed to pay no heed to them. She

went to the bier and lifted the covering. There she saw Geoffrey, her husband — dead!¹

The handsome, noble features in their setting of luxuriant blond hair, so lately lit up with life and animation, were now rigid in the chill of death. Long Constance stood immovable, with the edge of the covering in her uplifted hand, and gazed with horror-sticken eyes, as if transformed to stone.

The chaplain tenderly approached her. "Gracious Princess, permit us to conduct you to your apartments."

His words broke the silence. She uttered an exclamation of despair and with a shriek fell fainting into the arms of her ladies. The chaplain had her quickly removed to her chamber and cared for, and then returned to the hall. The knights had given over their weapons and horses to their servants, and were assembled there. A low murmur of hushed voices, mingled with sounds of mourning, filled the great room.

"Speak, Sir Knight," the chaplain implored of Höel of Mordant, Geoffrey's oldest vassal and friend, who stood by the bier with bowed head,

¹ This is one version of the manner in which Geoffroy came to his death. The generally accepted historical version is that he was killed at a tournament in Paris.



leaning upon his sword. "I know not yet how this dreadful tragedy occurred. I only realize that the Duke, whom we saw but a few hours ago in the flower of his health and strength, is dead."

Several voices were raised to relate the circumstances. The hunters had had an enjoyable time until noon, and had slain many stags and boars, but one huge boar, which the Duke discovered at the very outset, managed for a long time to elude his spear. The hounds kept upon its track, and, guided by their baying, he at last overtook it and hurled his spear. He only wounded it slightly, whereupon the infuriated beast turned upon the Duke's horse and attacked it with its tusks. At this instant several knights came up, and saw the Duke draw his hunting-knife, intending to stab the boar in the neck; but at that moment his horse, overcome by pain and fear, reared and fell, and in the fall the knife pierced the Duke's side. He lay weltering in his blood as his friends gathered around him, and only once he opened his eyes. They rested upon Knight Höel, who knelt by his side. The sorrowful glance of appeal in Geoffrey's dimming eyes deeply affected the knight. Raising his head he thus spoke: "Whatever it may be, my



Prince and brother-in-arms, that thou would'st ask, trust me it shall be done. I will devote my loyal service to the end of my life to thy memory, and hold it as a sacred trust." The Duke closed his eyes. A sigh escaped him, and his face was illuminated with joyous satisfaction. Then they carried his body home.

"And now," said Höel, "we will execute the last service for our master. Chaplain, remove the body to the chapel and perform the sacred rites." Then, turning to two of the knights, he said: "And you, my friends, keep the death-watch at the bier. I cannot yet master the sorrow which has overcome me. I must have time for reflection, for my responsibility to the ducal house is great. See that the gates are secure, and station sentinels. In the morning all must assemble in the hall and have their steeds in readiness, for messengers must be sent in all directions. Now, betake yourselves to rest, if you can find it," he ended with a sigh.

Suddenly cries were heard from above, and some one said, "The Duchess is dying."

"In the name of all the saints at once," groaned the knight, "see to it that she has help!"

The chaplain obeyed, but soon returned with the



announcement, "Our gracious lady has recovered and does not need me." Thereupon he motioned to the squires to take the bier into the chapel, and followed it. Through the open door the priest was seen as he advanced to the altar, which was faintly lit by tapers. In a low voice he began the service. The mourners remained kneeling for a time during the sacred ceremony, then gradually withdrew, and only the murmur of prayer was heard. Priest and watchers were alone with the dead.

Chapter II

The New Life

ARMED, and with helmet in hand, Höel entered the hall at early dawn, only to find it deserted. The chapel too was closed, for the chaplain had gone, and only the knights keeping the death-watch remained.

A page brought the knight a warm drink. He drained the cup, and as he turned to hand it back to him he saw the priest descending the stairs which led to the apartments of the Duchess.

"Have you seen our gracious lady? Then arrange for my admission also," Höel said to him.

"Come outside with me," replied the chaplain, much agitated, "and hear what I have to say, not here where we are so near the dead, but under God's sky."

Overcome with astonishment, Höel followed the chaplain as he strode forward in haste to the courtyard. As they went, a loud trumpet-blast sounded jubilantly from the battlements.

“Is the warder out of his senses? What means this fanfare in the house of the dead?” exclaimed Höel indignantly. “And what does that mean also? The black flag has been lowered on the watch-tower, and the banner with the arms of the Plantagenets floats in its place.”

“It means, noble knight,” replied the chaplain, “that Brittany has a new Duke, — our Lady Constance has a son.”¹

The knight’s eyes glistened with delight, but it was only for an instant. With a sigh he gently said: “Poor Geoffrey! Unfortunate child!” Then he stood for a time in deep thought. “All the same,” he said at last, recovering himself, “messengers must carry the double news to all the castles and cities. The Council of the dead Duke must send ambassadors to the courts of England and France.”

“As King Henry is engaged in a campaign against Scotland and Queen Eleanor passes away

¹ Duke Arthur of Brittany was born at Nantes, France, March 29, 1187, and was killed at Rouen, April 3, 1203. According to the author of this story, he was murdered on shipboard by King John, his uncle, because he refused to waive his lawful claim to the throne of England. History fails to make an authoritative statement of the manner of the young hero’s death, but it is unanimously conceded that John procured his assassination, if he did not commit the deed himself.

the time among her castles in Guienne, there does not seem to be urgent need of haste," said the chaplain.

"You are wrong. They must be informed as speedily as possible," replied the knight. As he was in the act of mounting his steed, which a squire had brought, a page rushed up and summoned him to the Duchess.

The knight followed the messenger to an upper room, where one of the maids promptly met him, and conducted him to a large apartment, against the rear wall of which the Duchess's bed stood under a gilded canopy. The curtains were partly drawn back, and in the half darkness he saw the face of the Duchess among the silken pillows. Höel knelt and awaited her commands. She motioned him to rise, and said, "Show him the child, Joconde."

The nurse approached, and lifted the veil from the little white bundle she was carrying, so that he might see the child. As he stooped to look at him, the little one opened its eyes and uttered a faint cry. The plaintive tone pierced Höel's heart. He laid his hand upon the child's head and said with deep emotion, "Accept my homage, son of my brave lord and friend."



The Duchess bade Joconde retire, and then said, "May all, worthy knight, like yourself, pay homage to Duke Arthur of Brittany, for it was this name my husband selected for his first son." She gave way to her emotions for a moment, and then said with firm voice:

"Take this signet ring of my husband's, show it to the members of the Council at Rennes,¹ and bid them execute my commands. The citizens of every city shall assemble; and to them and to every country it shall be proclaimed that Duchess Constance of Brittany will maintain the ducal authority, and that during the minority of her son she will rule all the possessions of the deceased Duke Geoffrey Plantagenet, with the help of God and the nobles of Brittany. Send a messenger also to the King of England and inform him of the death of his son and the birth of a grandson. But, above all, send a prudent man with a letter to King Philip Augustus at Paris.² Assure the King of our feudal loyalty as a vassal of France, and tell him

¹ Rennes, capital of Ille-et-Vilaine, France, was the capital of ancient Brittany.

² Philip Augustus, King of France, was born in 1165, and died in 1223. He was the son of Louis VII, and was noted for his banishment of the Jews, his participation in the Third Crusade with Richard the Lion-hearted, and the crusade against the Albigenses.

we shall render him our usual service in time of peace or war, and pay the customary tribute. In consideration of this he is to assist us in case of necessity against any enemy of our country or of the young Duke. Have the letter drawn up in temperate and friendly tone."

"It shall be done, my lady," replied Höel; "and what are your wishes as to the funeral of the Duke?"

"He shall be buried in the Cathedral at Rennes, and the chaplain must see that everything necessary is done. Now go, and God preserve you. May you quickly return for our protection." She leaned back, wearied. The curtains were closed, and the knight left the apartment with a feeling of relief. When he reached the courtyard he summoned his people and the chaplain, who inquired what commissions the Duchess had given him. He answered curtly, "Chaplain, he who says women are weak and timid has never known the Duchess Constance."

"But, tell me —"

"Only this," said Höel, with his hand upon his horse's bridle, "France is the watchword. She said scarcely a word about England."

Chapter III

Geoffrey's Legacy

UPON his arrival in Rennes, the ancient capital, Höel found the citizens greatly excited over the rumor of the Duke's death. As his little band rode through the streets, the people came from their houses and workshops, and a great multitude gathered round the castle. They had hardly heard the news of his death before it was followed by joyful intelligence, which turned sorrow into rejoicing. Enthusiastic shouts of "Hail to the new-born Duke! Long live Arthur Plantagenet!" rang out on all sides.

The Council and leading ecclesiastics were assembled when Höel entered the hall. After exhibiting the ring and executing his commission, he described to them the occurrence of the fatal day, but made no reply to their eager questioning as to the future.

"What is to be done, Knight Mordant?" they asked. "Brittany will remain loyal to the Duke; but will King Henry of England protect us? Philip



Augustus of France will certainly seek to extend his possessions."

"Let us do our duty," replied Höel. "We may accomplish great things if we remain united."

After a short rest Höel departed, taking a different route to the hunting-castle, in order to visit Castle Mordant and see his wife and little son.

He found them very happy and without any knowledge of what had happened. In a few words he described the condition of the Duchess to his wife. "And now, Bertha," he added, "prepare yourself and little Alan to ride with me. I shall not feel easy about the Duchess and the child until I know that you are with them."

Bertha in surprise drew Alan to her side. "Would you take me to the Duchess without knowing whether I shall be welcome? The Lady Constance has not been accustomed to children for years, and may not like youthful mischief."

"If not for her sake, Bertha, do it for the child's sake. Suppose a faithless nurse should place him under the control of the grandmother, Queen Eleanor of England, and he should meet with the same fate as her child, the little girl. What happened to her, do you ask? They say she was put in a convent.



If Geoffrey's son were to be placed in a monastery, I believe his father would not rest in his grave."

"I will go," assented Bertha. "Let the child be intrusted to me, and I will care for it as if it were my own. His lot, in any event, will be hard enough, for rulers care little for the rights of minors."

"Oh, that Geoffrey had only been on good terms with his father!" exclaimed Höel. "His participation in the rebellion into which his mother and brothers urged him estranged his father's heart."

"But they were reconciled afterwards."

"Yes, but his father's confidence was not restored, and the others have been subjected to every kind of injustice. What lies Eleanor told about John, her youngest son! His father does not trust him, and has given him no possessions. To save himself from impoverishment he is casting covetous glances toward Brittany."¹

"Her father's share to half the country cannot be taken away from her," said Bertha.

"Not by right; but might knows no right."

¹ "The King left only two legitimate sons, — Richard, who succeeded him, and John, who inherited no territory, though his father had often intended to leave him a part of his extensive dominion. He was thence commonly denominated 'Lackland.'" — HUME.



Perhaps, however, the jealousy between France and England, whose sovereigns will never permit their beautiful maritime provinces to go to another, may save us."

"What is the name of the little Duke?" interrupted Alan, who had climbed upon his father's knee.

"He is called Arthur."

"Will he play with me?"

"Not yet, but perhaps later."

After speedy preparations they departed; they reached the hunting-castle at evening, where they found the Duchess doing well. Bertha's fears proved groundless. She was heartily welcomed by Constance, who was at that moment specially grateful for any expression of sympathy. The Duchess well knew that she could not place her son in better hands, and for the first time she felt free from anxiety when Bertha cradled him in her faithful arms. She cared alike for the two children; and Alan, far from being jealous because his mother shared her love between them, displayed the utmost tenderness to the little Duke.

Höel was now free to devote himself to the sad duty of burying the dead. A great concourse of

knights, citizens, and ecclesiastics accompanied the body of the Duke to Rennes in an imposing procession, headed by Höel and the chaplain. All along the road they passed sorrowing people. Serious anxiety for the future filled all hearts, and sincere mourning followed the Duke to his grave.

Shortly thereafter the Duchess and her nearest attendants betook themselves to the capital, and were greeted with loyal homage. She met with no protests or opposition. Her regency was indorsed, and all the rights which Geoffrey had enjoyed in the English provinces were conceded. Höel remained steadfastly by the side of the Duchess and devoted himself exclusively to her service. His example, and his tender consideration for her, worked for her advantage, as it induced many who were wavering at first to join in making the recognition of her authority unanimous.

Chapter IV

The Embassy

AS the Duchess was obliged to devote the most of her time to affairs of state, the child was tenderly cared for by Bertha. The quiet of the little court was broken by the festivities attending the approaching christening of the Duke. Tournaments and sports were arranged, and the friends and adherents of the Duchess were summoned to Rennes. She had received no tidings from the relatives of her husband, whereas King Philip Augustus of France had promised to be represented by one of his knights, whose arrival was eagerly awaited.

At last the French gentlemen appeared at the gate of the castle in imposing array — knights in glistening armor, squires and servants also armed. Count von Gragny, a famous soldier and well-known to Höel on many a battle-field, came as the King's representative. The strangers were escorted to their quarters, and after a short rest Count Gragny exchanged his armor for court dress to wait upon the Duchess. With his little retinue he



rode through the narrow streets of the city to the castle, where the chamberlain conducted him to her presence.

Constance received upon a dais in the centre of the room, surrounded by her ladies, and bowed a gracious welcome to the Count, who knelt and delivered the greeting of his King.

"I am delighted, noble Count," Constance began, "that the King has granted my wish and is willing to be the godfather of the Duke."

"The King has shown you further favor, Lady Duchess, and has intrusted me with a message which is for your private ear," replied the Count.

The Duchess, surprised, motioned her ladies to withdraw. "Speak," she eagerly exclaimed, when they were alone.

"The King of France, in consideration of your unprotected situation and the dangers which threaten the heir of Duke Geoffrey —"

"Pardon me," interrupted Constance, "we do not feel that we are unprotected. Our vassals are faithful, and the people are loyal."

"Yet as dangers may easily arise, noble lady, when you least expect them, King Philip offers to undertake the guardianship of your son."



Constance was alarmed, but retained her composure, and asked: "Would not this provoke danger? It is the duty of the nearest paternal relatives, the King of England and his princes, to take the place of father to my son, and they may not yield that right."

"Are you sure they are willing to exercise it, Lady Duchess? and have you sufficient confidence in them to intrust your child to their care? Will they unqualifiedly recognize him as the Duke? King Henry is far over the frontiers of Scotland and his sons are not on the best of terms with you."

"Richard is noble and just. He is the eldest, and is under obligation to his dead brother, Geoffrey," replied Constance.

"Do not depend upon him. He is never in one place long enough to become attached to any one. I advise you to accept the King's offer."

"I will consider it, Count," replied the Duchess, rising. "For the next few days, meanwhile, you are my guest. We will let business rest during the festivities, but will confer with you again on this matter before you return to Paris."

The Count bowed and left the Duchess, who



remained for some time absorbed in thought. At last she called Bertha, who was accustomed to bring the Prince to his mother about that hour, and she at once entered, carrying the child in her arms. The Duchess rushed up to her, took the child, and tenderly kissed him. "I may enjoy my sweet one only a moment to-day, Bertha," she exclaimed. "Is it not glorious that God has given me such a charming gift of love? Surely fate should be kind to him, but, alas, clouds are gathering on the horizon of his life, and I am left alone to protect him. Now, Bertha, take my darling away, for Knight Höel comes to speak with me."

Höel was very anxious, for he feared, after the long interview with the Count, that difficulties had arisen. Constance began at once communicating to him what had been proposed, "Can you divine what King Philip Augustus has requested of me?"

"Requested, or demanded?" asked Höel.

"Both, only the demand was concealed. He wishes to take the guardianship of the Duke of Brittany."

"Ha! crafty as ever! Were his proposal disinterested, it would be well. Still, Philip has the power to protect you."

“But against whom? We are living in peace, and I must first know what to expect from England.”

“May I know what reply you made to the Count?”

“None, as yet. I asked time for consideration. See to it, therefore, that the French gentlemen have a cordial reception, and at the christening to-morrow the representative of the King shall be honored as far as is in our power.”

With this the Duchess closed the interview, and Höel repaired to his guests to ascertain their wishes and make their visit as pleasant as possible.

Chapter V

The Christening

THE little Duke was christened Arthur, as his father had decided. After the ceremony was concluded and he had been taken back to his chamber and consigned to Bertha's care, the Duchess summoned all her guests, as well as her knights and ecclesiastics, to a feast in the great hall. Constance was seated at the head of the table, under a canopy. The strangers, with whom she graciously conversed in French, sat near her, while the guests at the lower end of the table spoke in the native Breton dialect. Quiet at first, they gradually grew more animated as great flagons of wine were repeatedly filled and drained. Owing to the confusion in the hall they failed to hear the sound of horses' hoofs outside the castle, and the blast of a horn was the first announcement they had of the arrival of new guests. The chamberlain entered the hall and whispered to the Duchess, who thereupon rose, and with a wave of her hand ordered silence. "We have unexpectedly been



honored by the arrival of a noble visitor," said she. "It is Queen Eleanor. She is at the castle with her retinue. Let us hasten to receive them with the honors due to her."

Constance advanced to the entrance of the hall, followed by her nobles, a part of the guests remaining at table. Scarcely had she reached it when the Queen met her at the head of several knights.

With stately dignity Constance courtesied her greeting and spoke: "Welcome, illustrious Queen! and excuse us for not going out to receive you. We are surprised, having received no intimation of this visit, although we sent messengers with invitations."

The Queen stretched out her hand to Constance and kissed her on the forehead. "We have changed the route of the journey we had planned to greet you, daughter-in-law, and are truly delighted to find you so strong and well. We were ready to sympathize with you in your affliction, but it does not appear to be necessary."

"Honored mother of my dead husband, I shall never cease to mourn for Geoffrey; but you very well know that princesses have no time to abandon themselves to grief. But come and participate in



our feast. You will find worthy guests here, messengers from the King of France."

"Ha!" exclaimed the astonished Queen, as she recognized Count Gragny, who with the others advanced and bowed low. "Have you settled matters so far as to throw yourself already into the arms of Philip Augustus, even before you have taken the trouble to ascertain the policy of the King of England?"

"Although I have received no answer to my message to England," said the Duchess, "I doubt not that King Henry will approve my action in securing the good-will of our powerful neighbor and seeking his protection for my son, the Duke of Brittany."

"Let me see the child," replied Eleanor. As she noticed Constance looking inquiringly at Höel, she added: "Why do you hesitate? Have you any reason for concealing him from me?"

Höel went at once to notify Bertha, and when the Queen entered the chamber with Count Gragny and several other knights, all gathered about the cradle in which the child was lying. Eleanor gave one glance at the little Duke and then turned again to Constance. "I advise you to give up your game.



I shall never recognize this boy as Geoffrey's heir. Content yourself with your paternal possessions in Brittany, which I shall never enter again."

"What do you mean, Your Majesty?" exclaimed Constance, with increasing emotion.

"I mean that the heir came very suddenly, and when he was greatly needed," said Eleanor. "Who knows in what hut he was born and found?"

"This is monstrous!" interrupted Constance. "How dare you impute such a disgraceful thing to me, and insult me in my most sacred relations? Go! Only one who can invent such a story is capable of such action. You have a wicked heart!"

"Enough," said the Queen. "See to it that you and your child do not come in my way, otherwise woe to him and to you." As she said this she made a threatening gesture with her hand at the child.

Little Alan, who had been standing by his mother's side, darted forward and, seizing the Queen's arm, cried out in his shrill childish voice, "Don't you touch the Duke!"

The Queen regarded Alan with astonishment, and said with a sneer: "So! You have taught young and old to call him Duke without regard to the policy of others!"



“The united dukedom belongs to us as rightfully as does Guienne, which you inherited from your father, to you,” said Constance haughtily. “But now, Your Majesty, let us have peace. Remember, you are our guest, and as such we shall treat you with due honor.” The Duchess stepped to the door, and stood there until Eleanor had passed, then followed with her knights.

“What a woman!” whispered Count Gragny to Höel, who quietly shrugged his shoulders. He kept his eyes bent upon the Queen, as he suspected she might have communication with those near the Duchess, for he feared her wiles. Eleanor took very little part in the banquet, and shortly retired with her attendants, after a brief leave-taking.

Those remaining in the hall regarded each other in silence, but Count Gragny could not long endure the situation. He spoke out: “The Queen came like the bad fairy who always appears unexpectedly at christenings. Fortunately, she left no evil gift behind.”

“Yet, noble Count,” replied Höel, “she has left us anxiety.”

“Let us drown all thoughts of troublesome questions with mirth and wine,” exclaimed the Count,



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raising his glass. "Your Ladyship, I drink to the health of Duke Arthur."

Constance gracefully thanked him for the honor, and raised her glass to her lips. After that she announced the close of the feast and dismissed the guests.

She hastened at once to her child. She knelt down by his cradle and looked for a long time at the handsome little one lying in quiet slumber, watched his gentle breathing, and admired his rosy cheeks. Alan stood at the head of the cradle and kept watch over his Duke. With a sad smile Constance rose, took Bertha's hand, and left the chamber.

Later in the evening the Duchess, Höel, and her counsellors prepared a reply to King Philip's proposals. It had already been demonstrated by the Queen's conduct how little they could expect from her husband's family; for although as wife and mother Eleanor neither loved nor respected King Henry and his sons, she understood how to gain her own ends and embitter the feelings of others. Could affection for the child be expected of them when even his own grandmother would not acknowledge him? After due consideration it was decided to accept the guardianship offered by Philip Augustus



on condition that the King of England, on his return from the wars, agreed to it.

On the following day Constance gave her reply to Count Gragny, who expressed his delight, for he knew that the King would be pleased with the prompt and successful manner in which he had executed the commission.

"My King ordered me," he said, "to make arrangements for your safety at once. He will send you all the troops you need."

"We are not at war," replied Constance, "and consequently do not need help."

"Now that Eleanor has been here, Princess, do not expect that peace will be lasting. The help offered to-day may be too far away in time of danger to rescue your son."

Constance was deeply impressed by his importunity, and turned to Höel, saying: "You know best our means of defence. Do you think them sufficient?"

"The militia will not hesitate to take the field for you," replied the knight, "but only so long as war may last. Paid troops will remain all the time in your service, but of course they will be a burden upon the country."



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“Only a small number will be sent,” said the Count. “That is the King’s own stipulation.”

Constance was forced to accept, but with a sad heart, and dismissed the Count, who at once started for home with his attendants. The merrymaking arranged by the Count continued in Rennes, and the Duchess took part in it with apparent pleasure. But, as often as she could, she visited the room where Arthur played upon Bertha’s lap and crowded and laughed in play with Alan. She pressed her darling to her heart and sighed, “It is all for you, my son, all for you.”

Chapter VI

The Guardianship

NOT long after these events Philip's troops marched into Brittany, where they met with a quiet reception; but when they attempted to establish themselves in Normandy, they encountered violent resistance. The powerful barons there had made a complete surrender to the English government. They had accepted Geoffrey as its representative and had submitted to him, but they would not recognize Constance, for before her departure to England Eleanor had won them over to her side. Their followers were well armed, and stoutly resisted the French troops. In the numerous encounters which occurred the interests of the Duke of Brittany were no longer considered. The stake was the mastery of England or of France, and one or the other side alternately gained the upper hand.

It was still quiet in Brittany, and in Constance's vicinity Höel and his men kept good watch. Longingly and often the Duchess gazed at the child in



her arms and wished that he could soon be a man to fight with sword in hand for her and her rights. Thus they were living in apparent security at the castle in Rennes, but really in continual fear of approaching dangers. The times were troublous, and the world was full of disquiet, but Arthur passed his days pleasantly, in an atmosphere of love. Life was all smiles for him. Under Bertha's care and Höel's devotion he became both gentle and courageous, and as he grew stronger nothing delighted him more than rivalry with Alan in all knightly practices. The latter, older and stronger, was not only attached to the young Duke by friendship, but by duty and devotion, and thus became both his companion and protector. They were inseparable, and shared everything in common. They roamed the woods and fields together with all the joyous enthusiasm of youth, but their greatest longing was to perform heroic feats. They were much more delighted to listen to Höel as he told them of his adventures and exploits at arms than to the chaplain, who was their instructor. With rapt attention they heard the story of how Höel and Duke Geoffrey rode together to Normandy and other provinces, overcame the haughty barons, stormed their strong



castles, and sent them to England to pay fresh homage to the King. Arthur longed to be such a hero, and his dearest wish was to assist his mother in the restoration of the ancient authority. Combining boldness and gentleness, he was specially fitted to rule, and it was his greatest pride that he was entitled to the position of ruler by birth.

Arthur was in his tenth year when the report reached them that King Henry's sons, incited by Eleanor, had conspired to prevent his return from Scotland. Unexpectedly, however, he suddenly appeared in England and frustrated their plot. The news disquieted Constance so greatly that she sent Höel for information. He had been absent several days, and his return was now eagerly awaited.

One evening the Duchess was looking from her window, which commanded an extended view of the city and its vicinity. Fatigued with riding and hunting, Arthur had sought his mother, and was resting his head upon her shoulder. She turned to him and stroked his heated brow. Bertha and Alan were also present, and the room was very quiet. Suddenly Bertha stepped to the window and exclaimed, "There comes my husband with a stranger." The two rapidly drew near, and dismounted in the



castle yard, whence, seeing the ladies at the window, Höel came to their apartment. Bertha and the boys met him in the anteroom, at the door of which stood the Duchess. "What news do you bring?" she asked.

"Bad news," replied Höel. "King Henry is dead."¹

The Duchess silently motioned to the knight to enter, and seated herself. After Bertha had taken the boys away, Höel began: "The King died of a broken heart, so the people say. He could not endure the thought that the Queen had plotted his overthrow."

"Horrible! — and the Princes?"

"Richard threw himself at his father's feet and begged forgiveness. Prince John, on the other hand, hypocritically sought to clear himself of guilt. But the King knew only too well. 'All three sons,'² he groaned, and fell unconscious."

Constance started, and Höel was silent. Yes, the third one was Geoffrey.

¹ Henry the Second, King of England, died July 6, 1189. In the last year of his reign he was confronted with the rebellion of his sons Richard and John, in which they were assisted by Philip Augustus of France.

² Geoffrey, the father of Arthur, had been concerned in a previous rebellion against his father, instigated, like that of Richard and John, by Queen Eleanor.

“And did he die at once? Did he leave no instructions concerning the kingdom? Had he no thought for Geoffrey’s son?” asked the Duchess.

“They say he longed for his grandson and mourned because he had not been able to see him. He drew up his will and placed it in the keeping of the Lord High Chancellor. Then he turned his thoughts to divine things, took the sacrament, and passed away.”

Constance was silent for some time, then asked, “And does any one know the contents of the will?”

“It is sealed up in the royal exchequer and can be opened only in case the Prince — no, King Richard — shall die childless. Only the confidential witnesses know its contents,” said Höel.

“*King* Richard!” replied Constance. “God be thanked it is Richard who has come to the throne. He is noble and high-minded, and will protect us.”

“God grant it! Would that he could soon come to France and restore order.”

“Whence came the rider who brought the news?”

“From Rouen. English vessels have landed there, and brought Norman knights who were in the



Scottish campaign. They will guard the country until he can come himself and take possession."

"As soon as King Richard comes to Rouen, we will seek him there."

"Meanwhile," said Höel, "I will make ample preparations to insure your safety."

"Is it not shameful," said Constance indignantly, "that the Duchess of Brittany should be insecure in her own country?"

Höel was awaited in the hall by the two boys, who plied him with questions. The death of King Henry made a deep impression upon Arthur, who already realized that his fate had rested in his grandfather's hands. For the first time also he realized the insecurity of human greatness, and when suddenly the bells tolled in the city's church towers, and the castle chapel bell added its solemn peals, he was greatly overcome, and held fast to Alan's hand.

Chapter VII

The Journey

IT was a beautiful summer morning, and the hills and valleys of Brittany were flooded with sunlight. All Nature seemed exultant, and all living things were sharing her transports. The beauty of the fields and green woods concealed alike all traces of the last winter's storms and the ravages so often occasioned by men when they sow the earth with fire and blood.

As if still more to enhance the beauty of the scene, a cavalcade was seen approaching from the adjacent wooded heights. The riders followed the winding road, now in groups, now singly, and sometimes were entirely hidden from view. Clear, ringing voices, joyous laughter, and now and then deep manly voices mingled with the neighing of horses. The travellers were the Duchess of Brittany, her son, and attendants. The seneschal rode in advance with two heralds, followed by Constance in a riding-habit of green silk, mounted upon a beautiful palfrey. Höel rode by her side, his fiery bay taking the lead

whenever the road narrowed, to make room for the Duchess's horse. Then came Duke Arthur and Alan on prancing black steeds. Arthur sat jauntily yet securely in his saddle, his slight figure being a trifling burden for the noble animal, which seemed to take pride in carrying him. He looked boyish yet distinguished. His unusual beauty was a sufficient mark of his high birth even if his costume had not proclaimed it. He wore a cloak of brown silk embroidered with gold, and over it a short, dark satin mantle tipped with ermine. From his cap waved a heron plume, fastened with jewels. He was a figure of beauty as he rode through the charming world about him, engaged in earnest talk with Alan. Behind the youths followed the squires and troopers, next the Duchess's ladies, and in the rear the servants with the sumpter horses. It was an imposing though not a warlike train.

Their destination was Rouen, where King Richard had arrived, not, as Constance had hoped, to settle her affairs, but to consult with Philip Augustus about the Crusade.¹ It was all the more urgent, therefore,

¹ This was the Third Crusade (1189-92), which was led by Frederick Barbarossa of Germany (see the volume "Barbarossa" in this series), Richard the Lion-hearted of England, and Philip Augustus of France. They failed to recover Jerusalem, which had been recaptured by the Mussulmans in 1187.

for the Duchess to seek an interview with him and ascertain his plans before he entered upon such a long and dangerous journey. The King had been notified of her visit and had arranged for her safe passage through Normandy, whose frontier she was now approaching. As they emerged from the woods Höel heard a cry and the sound of a struggle in a thicket close at hand, and ordered a halt. Before he began an investigation, the disturbers of the peace appeared. Two men were dragging another along, answering his appeals with blows and abusive epithets. The victim was an old man, and the sight aroused Arthur's indignation. He rode up at once, and ordered the men to give an account of their conduct, and in the meantime to release the old man. The latter fell upon his knees and looked up to Arthur with tearful eyes. Höel and Alan came forward and heard the indignant protest of the two men. They declared they were bailiffs in the service of the King of France. "This man," they said, pointing to the kneeling victim, "is a Jew. The last day of grace King Philip allowed the Jews has expired."

"Is this true?" asked Arthur.

The old man looked up and said: "Listen, most

gracious Prince, for, although I know you not, I can see the reflection of the crown upon your brow. Yes, it is true. The great King Philip Augustus, although he has long allowed our race to live in his kingdom, has now set his face against us. He has said, 'Take the staff and leave the country; any one of you found in France after the day which I set shall die.' The King's servants have hounded us. They have plundered our homes; they have driven off our poor and wretched people. I was on my way to Holland, where our people have freedom to live, but I was so overcome by grief and hunger that I had to stay in the city until to-day — and now they have caught me."

"It looks bad for you, Jew," said Höel, shrugging his shoulders.

The bailiffs were again about to seize their prisoner, but Arthur cried: "Stop! Let him go free. It is my wish that he shall accompany us."

"We are the King's servants," demurred the bailiffs, "and must obey his orders."

"I am in command here, not King Philip," said Arthur boldly and proudly. "I am the Duke of Brittany. Take yourselves off, or my men shall bind you."

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The bailiffs, astonished at the delicate boy, who spoke with such dignity, lost no time in getting away.

The Jew, when he realized that he was free, bowed to the earth before Arthur and kissed his feet. The old man was so tattered, befouled, and ill-favored that Arthur had some scruples about addressing him, but at last he said, "If I protect you as far as Rouen will you then take ship to Holland?"

The old man consented, saying, "God will help me on."

Arthur gave him one of the packhorses, whose load was distributed among the other animals, and ordered the servants to let him ride with them. More quickly than might have been expected of one so weak, the Jew swung himself into the saddle and joined the little band, which once more resumed its march.

Constance took no part in the occurrence, and when Arthur rode up and entreated her approval of his act she said to him with some anxiety, "When the bailiffs complain to Philip he may be angry with you, my son."

Arthur became thoughtful as Höel added, "The



life of this Jew is of little consequence to Philip, for whatever he has of value the King will be sure to get."

"How is that?" asked Arthur.

"The dispersal of the Jews was ordered to please the Pope," said Höel, "and out of their wealth King Philip will raise the means for arming the Crusaders."

"That is not kingly," said Arthur indignantly.

"All the same they are Jews, and their treasures will be taken for the King's service. How can it harm them anyway? They exude gold as these pines do pitch."

Arthur reflected upon Höel's words with considerable surprise and almost regretted his display of sympathy. But when he looked back and saw the bent figure of the Jew following the others, who shunned him, he thought to himself, "Still, I could not let him perish."

That evening the Duchess and her most distinguished companions stopped at one of the stately abbeys of that region, and Arthur arranged that the Jew should spend the night with the servants who looked after the horses outside. They had soon become accustomed to their silent fellow-traveller, who served them for a laughing-stock.



After the fourth day the travellers at last approached their destination. They met crowds along the country road — haughty knights, warriors, and pilgrims intending to take part in the expedition to Palestine, besides ecclesiastics and monks, traders and shopkeepers. It was a good-natured crowd, but it often obstructed our travellers, and at times they were separated from each other. Arthur and Alan were frequently delayed by a group going in the opposite direction; then, laughing and shouting, they rejoined their party. But toward evening Höel decided to ride faster, so that they might reach the city before the gates closed. The party got more closely together, and Höel rode along the line, urging on both people and horses. While thus engaged he discovered that the Jew was no longer with them, and that the horse he had been riding was quietly following the others. Höel caught it by the bridle and looked about him to see if he were not mistaken. As he was doing so he noticed a piece of paper tied to the saddle, with a ring attached to it. He untied it and hastened to the Duke.

“Your ward has flown,” began Höel.

“So? Then he is both false and ungrateful,” said the Duke, in some confusion.

“Not this time,” replied Höel. “He has left the horse and this — see here.” He handed his find to Arthur, who took the ring from the paper with much surprise. Upon the billet was written in Latin :

“To the Duke of Brittany, in gratitude for saving his life. — Abraham of Paris.”

The ring was a heavy gold one with a magnificent emerald set in it. Arthur twirled it about, delighted with its brilliancy, then put it on his finger and placed the paper in his cloak.

“Abraham of Paris,” repeated the Duchess thoughtfully. “I well remember that name. He is called the richest of the Paris Jews. The King often bade him come to the court, and purchased jewels of him, and when he needed money Abraham furnished it; but I wish nothing to be said about our meeting him.”

Chapter VIII

King Richard in Rouen

AFTER brief delay at the gate, the travellers were admitted and escorted to the place selected for them. As Constance was anxious to meet the King at once, she sent word to the seneschal and followed him to the castle, accompanied by Arthur, Höel, and Alan. A marshal met them near the entrance and called a servant to aid them in dismounting. There was in the courtyard such a crowd of knights, pages, and court people of various ranks that they made slow progress. Arthur paid little attention to the brilliant rooms through which they passed or to the persons who occupied them. His thoughts were fixed upon one object — to see Richard, his uncle.

The marshal bade Höel and Alan wait in the great hall, where two halberdiers kept guard, and then beckoned to a page and ordered him to wait upon the Duchess. The page disappeared behind a door, which he almost immediately reopened. Stepping back into an anteroom, he left the guests free



to enter. With rapidly beating heart Arthur crossed the threshold, following his mother, and found himself in a spacious apartment, at the upper end of which King Richard rose from a carven arm-chair and advanced to meet the Duchess.¹ Arthur almost cried out when he saw the figure of the King before him, just as he had always imagined him to look, only more stately. The grandeur about him affected him but little, for his gaze was riveted upon the face of the King, which revealed dignity joined with strength and goodness, and upon those eyes which beamed so mildly upon his friends and flashed so terribly upon his enemies.

He greeted the Duchess cordially, took her hand, and said: "It is long, dear sister-in-law, since we met, and we have passed through great sorrows. But you have had one consolation," he added, placing his hand upon Arthur's shoulder. Arthur took the King's other hand and kissed it. King Richard invited his guests to be seated and took his place between them. Then he looked at Arthur again, murmuring to himself, "Geoffrey! Geoffrey!"

¹ Richard the First, surnamed the Lion-hearted, was born September 8, 1157, and was the third son of Henry the Second. He was killed in a war with Philip Augustus of France, John's ally.



Tears filled the Duchess's eyes as Richard continued: "We loved each other dearly. Geoffrey was less impulsive, and restrained me from committing many a rash act, but he stood by me to the last. Do you know, Lady Constance, when I was engaged in that unfortunate revolt against my father, how I came to you alone in the darkness of night, pursued by his soldiers? They demanded me as their prisoner, but Geoffrey would not surrender me, and we beat our assailants back from the walls. Geoffrey surely saved his brother, but in doing so he was in rebellion against his father."

During this conversation Arthur was lost in contemplation of his uncle. Even without armor Richard was the ideal of a hero. He was the incomparable knight who in every tournament dashed horse and rider into the dust; for whom no foe was too strong, no fortress too secure, and who, after his victories, sang in competition with the troubadours.

A smile lit up Richard's face as he noticed the boy's rapt gaze, and, turning suddenly, he asked, "What are you thinking about, Arthur?"

"I was thinking," replied Arthur with a start — "oh, I was thinking that my father could not

help standing by you. As brother and as knight he could not have done otherwise."

"And yet," said Richard, looking at the red cross fastened upon his left shoulder, "the Church now demands that I shall go to the Holy Land and make expiation for my resistance to my father's authority. I have promised to go, and shall keep my word, though it is hard to leave my kingdom, which is not yet quieted. Oh, Arthur, if you were only a man and could fight by my side! There is glory still to be acquired in the morning-land for him who is victor under the banner of Godfrey of Bouillon,¹ and the celestial crown of the martyr for him who falls."

Greatly excited by Richard's words, Arthur fell upon his knees, exclaiming, "I will go with you, my uncle and my king: I will be your page, your servant!"

Constance stretched out her hand as if to restrain him, but Richard said with a quiet smile: "No, Arthur; wait until you have come to a man's strength. There will be great deeds for you to perform later."

¹ The author's chronology is at fault in this connection. Godfrey of Bouillon was a leader in the First Crusade, and died at Jerusalem in 1100, before the period of this story.



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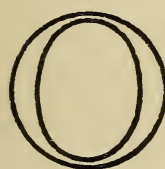


Arthur and the Duchess rose to take leave of the King, who embraced her, saying: "As you may be in need of rest, I will not detain you longer, but I will receive you again to-morrow as my guest."

The King struck a shield hanging upon the wall, whereupon two pages and the marshal entered, and under their respectful escort the Duchess and Duke left the castle after they had been rejoined by Höel and Alan.

Chapter IX

The Banquet

N the following day Arthur saw Richard in the midst of his brilliant and warlike retinue. The Duchess sat at the table next to the King, with Arthur by her side. Famous men, knights, statesmen, and ecclesiastics had seats below the Duke, who was quite elated because his rank placed him next the King. Their greetings reminded him that he must prove himself worthy of them by his own merit and heroic deeds, and a new world was revealed to him as he listened to the words of these men of wide experience, though he but half understood them. Many a one noticed the enthusiasm of the boy, and his high-bred mien, and was charmed by him. When King Richard raised his glass to drink the health of his sister-in-law, the Duchess Constance, the guests joyously responded, and added, "Long live Duke Arthur of Brittany!"

Greatly excited, Arthur rose to thank them, and, turning to Richard, exclaimed, "I will prove myself,



my royal uncle, worthy of the honor paid me by these brave men."

His admirers gathered about him enthusiastically, spoke of his great and brilliant future, and praised him as a true scion of the Plantagenets.

"Did you hear, Alan?" he said to his devoted friend, when at last they were alone in their room; "I am destined to achieve fame and greatness. I shall no longer be content to lead a quiet, unknown life."

All who came to know the Prince held him in the highest esteem, and were surprised that so noble a youth had developed in comparative obscurity. Many thought that King Richard might be childless, and that he was going to a distant war which would be full of danger. In that case the next heir to the English throne was Arthur.

Hardly a word passed about Constance's affairs and Höel's solicitude. Richard referred her to King Philip as soon as he should arrive; and when Constance, greatly embarrassed, asked, "Are you angry because we accepted his protection in a time of need?" Richard replied, "I do not blame you; you had to have him for a friend, for England left you in the lurch. My mother—" Here the King



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broke off abruptly, and then closed by saying, "I think everything will be arranged by Philip. Arthur, of course, will keep Geoffrey's possessions, not only because of respect for the dead, but also for our love of his son."

After a week, which to Arthur passed like a pleasant hour, King Philip arrived in Rouen. His principal counsellors and several high ecclesiastics were in his retinue, but not so many soldiers as in that of Richard.

Arthur was present at the first meeting of the two sovereigns, and Philip's searching glance discovered him even before Richard introduced them. At the words, "My cousin and ward," Philip stooped and kissed his forehead. When Arthur, greatly moved by his cordiality of manner, greeted him as the protector of his childhood, Philip's serious face was illuminated with a gracious smile, revealing the favorable impression the Duke had made upon him. He had always sought the control of the Duke of Brittany to hold England in check, but now he so unexpectedly found Arthur such an engaging personality that he determined not to lose sight of him. He called upon Constance and renewed his assurances of friendship. When she



expressed some anxiety lest, in the absence of the two kings, she might be troubled by Eleanor, who was to remain in England as regent, Philip invited her to go to his court. "You and your son," he said, "shall be under my feudal protection; and should you have any fear for your personal safety, you can be sure of an honorable reception in Paris."

Constance expressed her thanks in Richard's presence, hoping he would make a still closer claim to Arthur; but the Crusade monopolized all his thoughts. He had already recognized Brittany as the hereditary fief which would belong to Arthur when he came of age, and with this assurance Constance had to be content.

The departure of King Richard well-nigh broke Arthur's heart, and Richard embraced him with deep emotion. Philip admonished them again to go to Paris whenever it seemed best.

"That will yet happen," said Höel to Alan on their way back. "Philip well knows that fate will force Arthur into his arms. Had Richard thought more of the future, we should not have been going home thus."

Chapter X

The Return to Rennes

THE friendly reception which the young Duke everywhere met as he reëntered Brittany made the home-coming very dear to him. The situation had changed, as he now realized, and the people had great expectations of his future. When he came to the gates of cities, the people went out to meet him with welcomes and good wishes. Arthur showed interest and kindness for all, and the Duchess gave him precedence everywhere and rejoiced at the enthusiasm manifested for him, both by high and by low.

Upon their arrival at Rennes they received sad news. Bertha was no more. She had died after a brief illness. It was the first real sorrow in Arthur's life, and his grief was hardly less than that of Höel and Alan, who felt as if their happiness were forever lost. It separated Arthur's present life from his past life, and served to concentrate his thoughts upon the future. All the



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news from the great world, into which he had had a brief glance, now became of interest to him, especially everything concerning the Crusade. As time passed, wandering pilgrims and minstrels came and told of events in the morning-land, — of Richard's exploits before Acre and Ascalon,¹ and of his heroic conduct in times of danger, which had won for him the name of "Lion-hearted." Then news ceased to come for a long time; but suddenly the report spread that Philip Augustus had returned to France with only a remnant of his army. It seemed incredible at first, but they soon found that it was true, for the Duchess received a letter from Paris in which Philip urgently requested her to come there with Arthur. She hesitated, however, for her safety in Brittany was not imperilled. The King's letter surprised them all, particularly Arthur, who had a presentiment that it foreshadowed a turning-point in his life.

One evening a pilgrim appeared at the castle gate and desired to speak with the Duke. The latter had just returned from the chase and was standing in the anteroom as the stranger entered.

¹ Acre, in Palestine, was captured by the Crusaders in 1191, and Ascalon in 1153. The latter city was the birthplace of Herod the First.



"Rest yourself, holy man," said Arthur, "and then tell me your errand."

"Allow me to speak with you in private," replied the pilgrim. After Arthur had dismissed those standing about, the pilgrim whispered a few words to him.

Hardly had he done so before Arthur made a loud outcry, and rushed into the terrified Duchess's apartment, exclaiming, "Richard is a prisoner!" As he knew nothing more about it, the Duchess, after summoning Höel, had the pilgrim brought to her, and asked him for the particulars. As soon as the latter removed his palmer's hat, Höel recognized him as Count Guntram, one of the Crusaders in Richard's army. After the first greetings he told, at Arthur's request, the story of the events which led to the abandonment of Palestine. Forsaken by his allies, whom he had alienated by his haughtiness of manner, Richard realized when it was too late that he could not rescue Jerusalem with his army alone. He withdrew reluctantly from the Holy City, and decided to return. His vessel was separated from the others and wrecked upon the Italian coast. Too impatient to wait for the rest of the fleet, he undertook to retreat with a few compan-



ions. As they had to traverse a hostile country, they adopted the garb of pilgrims, but they could not elude the sharp scrutiny of spies. Richard fell into the hands of the Duke of Austria, whom he had greatly offended during the Crusade, and the Duke consigned his distinguished prisoner to Henry the Sixth, Emperor of Germany.¹ His fugitive companions were making their way to their homes.

Arthur, completely absorbed in Richard's fate, contemplated plans for his deliverance, and had no doubt that all the princes would unite with him to rescue the prisoner. Guntram, however, gloomily shook his head, and said: "Richard is imprisoned in the strong castle of Trifels² on the Rhine, and there he will remain until he is released for a heavy ransom. Think rather about yourself and your own affairs, noble Prince. Your Uncle John, hoping that Richard will never return, is preparing to attack Brittany and get you into his power as soon as possible. Make your escape at once, lest all the noble scions of the house of Plantagenet

¹ Henry the Sixth, born in 1165, was the son of Barbarossa, whom he succeeded as King of Germany in 1190.

² Trifels was an imperial fortress in the Rhine Palatinate, near Annweiler, which was the resort of mediæval emperors. Only its ruins remain.



fall, and John remain, to the misfortune of the world."

Knight Guntram frequently repeated his warning before he left the Duchess's court, and the impression it made upon his hearers was soon strengthened by indications of its truth.

The country gradually began to grow restless and excited. The coast-dwellers removed into the interior, for English vessels had been seen, and they feared a landing. A letter also was received from Queen Eleanor, in which the Duchess was warned not to make any claims upon England for her son's rights, as they would not be recognized. In the event of Richard's death, John, who was now sharing the sovereignty with Eleanor, would certainly succeed to the throne.

In view of the manifest danger to the Duke's rights it was decided that they must seek the protection and help of Philip Augustus. Accompanied by their nearest and most devoted attendants, Duchess Constance and Arthur once more set out, this time upon an eventful journey. Mourning over the fate of their country and their own fate as well, they left their beloved Brittany. Hardly had they crossed the frontier when John's troops



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poured into the country, beat back the mercenaries of Philip Augustus, and placed his banner above the gates of the city. The people mournfully submitted to his yoke, hoping in their secret hearts for the return of their legitimate ruler.

Chapter XI

With King Philip Augustus

CCONSTANCE and Arthur were received at the court of Philip Augustus in Paris not after the manner of fugitives. The King gave them royal recognition, and his spouse, the gracious Agnes of Meran, greeted them most cordially. Philip evinced a peculiarly friendly interest in Arthur; but he met his urgent request for assistance with a quiet smile, saying, "I shall do all in my power to help you to retain your possessions and all your rights. In the meantime, as there is a quarrel to be settled between me and the Count of Flanders, will you go with me and win your spurs on my side?"

The King looked sharply at Arthur, who, thirsting for action, acceded to his proposal notwithstanding the Duchess's disapproval. She was obliged to consent in the end, however, for Höel and Alan, who found idle court life intolerable, gladly agreed to go also, and were eager to participate in the affair.



Arthur was to be admitted to knighthood at once, and chose Alan for his brother-in-arms. During the night which preceded the important ceremony, the youths kept knightly vigil to uplift their souls in prayer. They were escorted by Höel and some of the leading knights to the castle chapel, where they were left alone, after an impressive parting. The barred doors shut them out from the world, and they knelt a long time before the altar, engaged in their devotions. These concluded, they arose, and with drawn swords made a circuit of the chapel walls, pausing at times before the memorials of distinguished princes, whose statues seemed almost ghostly in the uncertain flickerings of the ever-burning lamps. The banners fastened to the columns, which reached to the dome, fluttered, and the trophies gave out a hollow sound as the youths passed them. At last they reached the altar again, and almost involuntarily Arthur began to express his deep emotions. He thought of the cruel fate which had snatched his father from him, and of the sorrowful burden which had overwhelmed his mother. With a firm voice he pictured the future for which he longed so ardently and hopefully. He would earn distinction and fame under Philip's leadership,



and all brave heroes would gladly help him in his struggle for his rights. Then, when Richard had returned to the throne of England, and he had earned Philip's good-will, how successfully his life would unfold! "And you, Alan, my brother-in-arms," he said, turning to him, "shall always be nearest my side, however high a station I may reach."

Glowing with youthful enthusiasm, Alan knelt before Arthur and lowered his sword with the utmost reverence, for he believed in Arthur with all his soul. Joyfully the latter exclaimed: "Oh, that a sign might be given to reveal my future!"

At that instant the moon broke through the clouds and illuminated the lofty stained glass windows. In the sudden crimson glow Arthur and Alan looked as if they were sprinkled with blood. Their faces, hair, and shoulders were tinted a deep red. They gazed upon one another with astonishment, but the red glow soon disappeared, and they were once more in the semi-darkness. Though the effect, which was caused by the light passing through the ruby-red panes, was easily explainable, yet they were deeply impressed by it. They spoke no more, but stood motionless by the altar, awaiting the coming of day.



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The morning light had hardly broken when the doors of the chapel were opened and a band of knights came to greet their new brothers. Höel embraced them and smiled at Arthur's disturbed countenance; but when he saw that Alan too was pale and agitated, he became serious. There was no time to question them, for a multitude quickly poured into the chapel. The entire court was soon assembled. The ecclesiastics gathered about the altar, and at last the King entered with the Queen and the Duchess Constance. At the close of the religious service Philip entered the chancel and bade Arthur kneel. Touching his shoulder with his sword, he dubbed him knight and received his vows. When Alan had likewise been admitted to knight-hood, their golden spurs were given them, and shouting "Saint Denis!" and "Saint George!" the knights embraced their new comrades. All present joined in congratulation, and Höel had to tear them away almost by force, so that they might have rest and refreshment and be in readiness for the afternoon's tournament. When the time came, they were assisted in putting on their armor by knights, but Arthur kept his sash in his hand so that his mother might bind it about him. The gloomy

night was forgotten, and as he passed along the spacious corridors of the Louvre¹ every one he met stopped to admire his youthful beauty and to make smiling return for his friendly greeting.

As he approached the Duchess's apartment he heard delightful strains of music, and hesitated about entering; for Constance, since the great sorrow had come into her life, seldom touched the harp. At last, however, he softly opened the door and glanced into the large room. The Duchess was reclining upon a couch, her head resting upon her hand, and her pale face bedewed with tears. A young lady, who was playing the harp, sat near her on a tabouret. She ceased as Arthur quickly advanced and bowed low to the two ladies. The younger rose in surprise and looked inquiringly at the Duchess, who took her hand and, turning to Arthur, said, "You must know, my son, who has played so beautifully for my consolation. This is the Princess Marie of France,² whom Philip has

¹ The Louvre, now one of the world's famous art museums, was a castle of the kings of France from the thirteenth century, and the chief royal palace until Versailles was built by Louis the Fourteenth. Most of the interior has been occupied as a museum since 1793.

² Marie of France was the daughter of Philip Augustus.

brought from the cloisters to-day. Though it is our first meeting, she well knows my sorrow."

"Noble lady," said Marie gently, "I too have known sorrow. My mother is dead."

"May the blessing of Heaven comfort you, gracious lady, and bring its peace to a heart which knows so well how to comfort others," exclaimed Arthur. "I shall go to the field contentedly, for I know that an angel will be at my mother's side."

Trumpet peals from the courtyard summoned to the tournament. The clank of armor was heard in the anteroom, and knights were in waiting to act as Arthur's escort.

"It is my first venture with arms, dear mother. Give me your blessing, I beseech you," implored Arthur; "and you, Princess, shall tie on my sash as a surety of good fortune in the contest."

Marie directed a questioning glance at the Duchess, and when she smiled in return, threw the scarf over Arthur's shoulder and fastened it. After a word of thanks, Arthur hastened to his waiting associates, and the ladies betook themselves to the Queen, whose guests they were to be at the tournament.

The field was encircled with a dense throng of



persons of all ranks. The spectators watched Arthur eagerly as he rode in, followed by Alan and four knights, who drew up in line. Their adversaries confronted them in similar line. At a signal from the King the knights rushed at each other. Höel smilingly watched his *protégés*, who distinguished themselves by their daring and dexterity. At the first onset Arthur parried the thrust of his enemy, and at the second advanced from the other side with such fury that his opponent was taken off his guard and was dismounted. Arthur was declared victor. The same good fortune attended him in the remaining contests, and at the close he received a wreath from the Queen's own hands as his prize. Never was handsomer knight seen than Arthur, as with visor raised he lifted his crowned head and saluted the princesses. At the court banquet he was assigned a place between his mother and the Princess Marie, and his heart swelled with joy and pride.

The time for the departure of the expedition drew nigh, and Arthur spent his leisure moments in the company of the Duchess and her young friend. On the last evening the King visited them, and after a brief conversation turned to the Duke.



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“Take a long farewell,” said he. “Guard yourself in battle, for your reward will be Marie’s hand.”

Arthur and the Princess stood speechless with surprise for some time, but the silence was at last broken by the Duchess: “Yes, Arthur, it is the King’s will to give Marie to you as wife, and to me as daughter, some day, when our lot is a happier one.”

“For that I hope, with God’s help,” answered the King.

Chapter XII

In the Field

ARTHUR was in the field several months with Philip, and though he had to endure all that powerful warrior's severe discipline, he fought for him as valiantly as he would have done for himself. All this time the enemy remained unsubdued; but at last the King, having cut off all probable chance of escape, looked for a decisive result. The day for the attack was fixed, and everything was made ready. On the evening before the battle, after issuing his orders, the King retired to his tent to read some letters which a messenger had brought from Paris. The chancellor urgently entreated him to return, for disorder was spreading, and the finances were in such desperate condition that he could procure no more money.

“Ha!” said the King to himself, “how shall we meet the needs of the Empire? There is but one way. The Jews must empty their pockets. The ban shall be raised. We expelled them to please



the Pope, who is now secretly plotting with my enemies against me and annoying me in every way." The King called for his secretary, but instead of that official a knight suddenly entered the tent. Recognizing Arthur, he waited for him to speak.

"Oh, my King," said Arthur excitedly, "I have had news from my uncle."

Philip frowned and asked, "What does John want now?"

"My news is not from John; I am speaking of Richard. He is free. He is no longer a prisoner in the castle of Trifels."

"How," interrupted the King, "has the ransom been furnished?"

"He is free," repeated Arthur; "a deserter from the Netherlands brought the tidings. Richard has embarked on the Holland coast. They recognized him, though he went there in disguise."

"Alone!" said the astonished King. "Oh, the Lion-hearted!"

"Without doubt he has crossed to England," continued Arthur excitedly, "and now it is time my King, for me to hasten to his assistance."

"Thoughtless youth!" broke in Philip, "would you forsake me before the end of the campaign and

ingloriously leave before we know whether Richard has actually reached his fatherland?"

Arthur grew thoughtful, and retired to consult Höel and Alan. The latter was eager to go, for he was not enthusiastic in his devotion to Philip; he would rather have fought for Richard. But Höel twirled his gray mustache and shook his head. He feared Richard's rash and unstable disposition, and knew that he could not be relied upon. "Philip is right in this matter," he said. "Let us first dispose of this Fleming; after that it will be time to think of the other matter."

The battle was fought the next day, and resulted in the defeat of the Count of Flanders after a stout resistance. The King himself led his warriors, sword in hand, in an attack upon the enemy, who were seeking to hold a bridge. His battle-cry, "Montjoie St. Denis!"¹ spread panic in the ranks of his foes, and "Plantagenet!" "Plantagenet!" resounded where Arthur and his knights were fighting.

The victory was won. The enemy were driven over the bridge, and threw away their arms. The

¹ Montjoie is the name of a hill near Paris where Saint Denis was murdered. In tournaments "Montjoie" was the cry of the French heralds; and "Montjoie St. Denis" was the French battle-cry.



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King warmly congratulated Arthur upon his bravery, but did not grant his request for leave of absence. Arthur reluctantly submitted rather than make his appearance before Richard as a fugitive without knights or warriors.

In the meantime Richard reached England; and as soon as he had announced his presence to his friends he ascended the throne amid popular rejoicings, John yielding his claim with seeming willingness. About the same time Philip returned to Paris; Arthur accompanied him, and was so delighted to see his mother and bride once more that he forgot his longing to go to Richard.

Banquets and tournaments were arranged by the court, and Arthur, because of his bravery, was the central figure among all the youthful heroes. So continuous were the feasts and sports that he hardly had time for thought.

One morning Alan, equipped and spurred as for a long ride, came to Arthur's bedside and woke him, saying, "Richard is in France."

"Let us hasten to him, then," said Arthur, springing up.

"You had better not go. It will only occasion needless delay. Let me go to your uncle," implored

Alan. "I can reach him quickly. He is about to attack the Duke of Limoges, and is camped with his little army before the fortress of Chalus. I will tell him all, and if he calls you, you need no longer hesitate. Let me go, my Prince, and keep my mission a secret from the court. They are playing false with you, one and all."

Alan rushed out, and Arthur looked after him in surprise. Only Höel knew of his son's undertaking, and he gave out that he had sent him away. Philip, who was well apprised of what was going on, kept quiet, and only sought to attach Arthur to him still more closely.

When the entertainment came to an end, Philip left the Louvre to hold court at Compiègne¹ during the beautiful springtime. How delightful it was to roam about that great forest! Every day the Princess rode on her white palfrey, with her falcon attached to her slender wrist, Duke Arthur riding by her side upon his fiery Arab steed, which had been given him by the King. A band of companions and servants on foot and on horse followed

¹ Compiègne is a town in the Department of Oise, France, and is famous for the royal palace rebuilt by Louis the Fifteenth. Napoleon the First greatly enriched its interior.



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them, and the hills and woods resounded with the baying of hounds and the halloos of hunters. A mystic charm seemed to pervade the greenwood, which protected them from all contact with the outside world and made life a happy dream. The Duchess herself seemed to forget her grief and the insecurity of her affairs, and the King encouraged all these joyous sports without participating in them.

But suddenly these happy revellers were recalled to the realities of life by a fearful occurrence. King Richard the Lion-hearted was dead before Chalus — killed by an arrow. Arthur could not believe the dreadful news until Alan, pale and exhausted by his hard ride, arrived and confirmed it. He came from the spot, was with the King when he received his death wound, and brought his last message of continued faith in Arthur's loyalty and uprightness, and his wish that he could once more see his nephew. But, alas, it was too late now! The great Lion-hearted was gone, and John mounted the vacant throne.

"Never, so long as I live, will I relinquish my paternal inheritance," exclaimed Arthur.

Chapter XIII

War Preparations

IN the excitement which King Richard's death produced in England, Eleanor contrived to secure an appearance of justice in John's sovereignty. A spurious will of Henry the Second's was opened by her, by the provisions of which John was given the crown, regardless of the legitimate claims of the son of Geoffrey, his oldest brother. By this means Arthur was also cut off from the succession. The injustice was clear enough ; but John, with the aid of a strong following of the nobles, whom he had secured by artifice and promises, kept possession of power. The time was now come for Philip Augustus openly and without delay to maintain Arthur's rights. Nothing less was at stake than the title to the English crown. John was declared a throne-robber, and was summoned as a feudal tenant before the French tribunal. In case of disobedience war would be declared against him. John had already made his plans to go to France at the head of an army, with the intention, as far as he

was able, of permanently wresting the English provinces from the domination of France. He had not a doubt he could easily settle the claims of Constance and Arthur and succeed in his purpose. Determined as Philip Augustus may have been to defend Arthur's rights, somehow the war preparations were delayed much longer than seemed safe to the Duke, who could scarcely conceal his impatience. He resolved to challenge his uncle to single combat, and reluctantly followed the advice of his mother to act with caution.

"Why does Philip hesitate?" he indignantly exclaimed.

"I believe the King is waiting for money," replied Höel.

Arthur contemptuously shrugged his shoulders.

"Alas!" sighed Constance, "how can our plans succeed? We are very poor."

Arthur hastened to the Louvre, and although the chamberlain informed him that the King was holding an important interview, he insisted upon admission. Nothing could be more urgent than his own affairs.

"It serves you right," the King was saying as the Duke was announced. Philip was seated at a table covered with papers. By his side stood an old



man in a cringing attitude, who cast a hasty glance at Arthur as he entered.

"Welcome, cousin," said the King, with a smile. "You have come in time to be a partner in our business arrangement."

He beckoned to the old man, who submissively bowed his head. His spare figure was clad in a dark cloak of heavy silk. A tall black velvet cap covered his head and his long gray locks hung down his shoulders. His attire proclaimed him a Jew, and when he began to speak his voice awakened memories in Arthur's mind.

"Your Majesty," said the Jew, "spare us this demand. Our coffers are still empty because of the treasures you took from us not long ago, when Your Grace allowed us to return to your kingdom."

"You shall only lend to us this time," said the King.

"Upon what security?" quickly asked the Jew.

"Upon this security," said Arthur, turning toward him and displaying the ring he wore on his finger. "Would you like to see the note also?" he said with a smile. "Do you know how it reads?"

The Jew hesitated an instant, then turned the ring to the light and looked keenly at Arthur.

Raising his head, he said with a certain nobility of expression, "I know you. You are the Duke of Brittany."

"Say rather, the King of England," added Philip. "Well, Arthur, let us close up this business with Abraham, which has already fruitlessly consumed an hour of our time. Listen, Abraham. We need thirty thousand gold gulden to equip our troops, and a like sum in six months to pay them."

The King arose, and Abraham went to the door; but before leaving he turned to Arthur and said in a low tone, "If you will come to my poor abode this evening, most gracious Duke, you shall be satisfied."

Chapter XIV

In the House of the Jew

AT nightfall Arthur and Alan, stoutly armed, proceeded to the Jewish Quarter, which occupied a remote part of the city and was surrounded by walls. Its only gate was open, and the two passed undisturbed through the dark narrow streets, bordered with tall houses. The few windows were barred with iron shutters, and wherever a door was open one might fancy he was looking into an endless vault. Human figures appeared now and then, timorously avoiding the gaze of the strangers, and looking after them suspiciously from their lurking places. It was with some difficulty that Alan induced an old woman to stop and tell them where Abraham lived.

Abraham's house was a large one, with tightly closed doors and windows. At the sound of the knocker, a wicket was opened behind the iron grating and a voice asked the strangers' business. Alan answered cautiously that they were expected by Abraham. Thereupon followed a clanking of bars



and bolts; the heavy door was opened, and Abraham stood on the threshold, bowing low, and saying: "Welcome, noble gentlemen! Enter!"

It was not without some apprehension that the youths followed him through a low, dimly lighted passageway. The air was close and heavy, and no sound could be heard from without. At last their guide opened a door, threw back a dark curtain, and bowed the strangers into an apartment where they stood as transfixed with surprise as if they had entered another world. They knew not whether they were in a garden or a salon. High walls with many columns, balconies, and galleries enclosed a spacious room which, open above, disclosed the sky. A splashing fountain occupied the centre. All about flamed countless tapers upon metal candelabra set in luxurious flower-beds. Groups of shrubs bearing rare fruit sprang from the soil, which was covered with fine green turf and colored stones set in a beautiful mosaic. Here and there were heavy purple rugs upon which soft, gold-tasselled cushions were scattered about. Festoons of flowers and rich draperies depended from the galleries and columns. A banquet table set with glistening crystal and silver plate stood upon an estrade. The youths seated

themselves upon a silk-covered settle with golden feet, and Abraham said with the utmost reverence :

“ Be my guests, noble gentlemen, and count it no disgrace to eat with a Jew, whom you, my gracious Duke, once rescued when he was near to death.”

Abraham clapped his hands and two handsome, black-eyed boys came forward, bringing the strangers perfumed water in silver bowls. Then food and sweet, spicy wines were set before them. But all this was done without noise and with soft, quick movements; for at meals the Jews were always apprehensive and ever in readiness for flight. Abraham was the first to speak. Turning to the Duke, he said: “ The gold which King Philip demanded I refused, for he has already had enough from us. Are you sure indeed that if he had it, he would use it for your advantage, Duke of Brittany? ”

Arthur replied that it was only the lack of money which kept him from beginning the war.

“ And do you expect to gain the crown of England? Would you not be fortunate even if Brittany were your own? ”

Arthur reddened and said, somewhat hesitatingly, “ It is my right, my inheritance.”



“Pardon me,” continued Abraham. “You would grace a throne, and what I can do shall be at your service. King Philip may have the gold, and I hope it will be used for your advantage. But a younger prince needs many things which he may not obtain from the King. Perhaps I may in some ways realize your wishes also. Be pleased, gracious Duke, to follow me.”

Abraham led the astonished youths into a subterranean vault lit by a lamp from above, unlocked a massive chest, and, lifting the heavy lid, invited Arthur to come nearer. It was filled with golden ornaments and jewels. Opening a second chest, which was filled with leathern bags, he said: “Accept. Every bag contains a thousand gold pieces. Accept, noble Duke.”

“No!” said Arthur, stepping back. “What you give Philip will suffice me.”

“But Philip will have to give me security,” said Abraham; “that is our business.”

“And I can give you no security,” replied Arthur.

“You yourself are my security, Duke,” said Abraham with great earnestness. “When you shall come to the throne you will not forget the children

of Israel, and you will allow them a home in your dominions.”

“I promise that,” said Arthur. “Once I have the power, I will be a just ruler.”

“Take this as a souvenir of this hour,” said the Jew, throwing a golden chain around Arthur’s neck. Then he turned to Alan and gave him a bag of gold. “Equip a special troop of trusty, valiant men who will stand by your Duke in every time of danger,” said he. “I do not mean men like you, for such hearts as yours cannot be bought with gold.”

“That is enough,” said Alan as Abraham placed one bag after another in Alan’s cloak. “Thanks! thanks, Abraham! Farewell!”

“God prosper you,” said Abraham as he escorted them to the street. They had some difficulty in getting out of the Quarter, as the gate was closed, but when Alan announced their names to the captain of the watch, it was opened at once. They hurried back to their dwelling and told their experiences to Höel, who advised them to let no one but Constance know how they came by their treasure.

Chapter XV

Arthur's Departure

THE recruiting of troops for the Duke of Brittany now made rapid progress. Famous knights offered themselves and their followers for his service. Many of the leaders in the Crusade, who had been forced to discharge their followers, now assembled them anew under Höel's standard and accepted his earnest money, and Alan selected sixteen knights, the flower of the young nobles, who devoted themselves to the exclusive personal service of the Duke and received a princely sum for their outfit.

The court ladies also took an active part in the war preparations and assembled daily in the Queen's apartments to work upon fine embroideries. Arthur and his knights were provided with gorgeous banners and sashes, and were often consulted about their decoration.



"No, Marie," said Arthur, noticing her work, "place no king's crown above my escutcheon; as a true Plantagenet, the broom flower is my only emblem."

"But you, not John, are the King," replied Marie.

"I will decide that on the field," said Arthur.

All his petty troubles vanished, Philip was now ready for the successful prosecution of his plans. He decided that Arthur should go with a part of the force to Anjou and establish himself there, and he himself would follow later with the main army and completely shatter John's power. But before he made any move, Philip resolved to attach Arthur yet more closely to him by marrying him to the Princess Marie. The bridal pair, as well as the Duchess, were greatly surprised by this decision, and only the nearest intimates were bidden secretly to the nuptial ceremony. At midnight, in the glare of torches, Arthur stood with his bride before the altar, where he had lately been admitted to knighthood. Alan thought of that night, and glanced at the window through which the red light had streamed upon them. But no evil omen disturbed the blessing which the priest invoked



upon the union. The marriage was celebrated next day at court, and at the same time the coming departure of the Duke was announced. At last the moment was at hand when Arthur must leave all and take the field to fight for the crown of his ancestors.

Duchess Constance strove hard to remain calm as she bade Arthur farewell, but her heart sank within her as she thought of the dangers he must encounter. Gladly would she have restrained him from the undertaking into which he had impetuously thrown himself. Holding him in sorrowful embrace, she said with quivering voice: "Farewell, my son! My only one! May the saints preserve you." The Princess Marie also embraced him, sobbing: "Do not go, my husband! I shall never see you again."

"Keep good courage, Marie. God is merciful."

"But men are cruel. Oh, stay with me!"

"Let me fight for my honor and my crown. You shall see me return victorious."

Arthur tore himself away and left them. A band of his knights awaited him in the castle yard and Alan was holding his steed's bridle. Arthur swung himself into the saddle and, with a glance



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and a wave of his hand toward the balcony where Constance and Marie were standing, rode to the head of his followers. With an exultant shout, "France for Plantagenet!" and with banners waving and arms glistening, the Duke of Brittany led the way to fight afar for his crown.

Chapter XVI

The War with John

ARTHUR advanced unmolested with his little force on the road to Anjou, via Touraine, until he reached Tours. He expected to encounter the first resistance there; and indeed a considerable armed band did meet him near the city gate, but not with hostile design. They were knights of Anjou and Poitou, who had deserted King John and come out of the city to welcome Arthur. As soon as the Duke came in sight they loudly shouted, "Hail, all hail, Arthur Plantagenet, King of England!" Both surprised and delighted, Arthur entered the hospitable city. The people welcomed him in the most friendly manner and escorted him to the bishop's palace, where quarters had been provided for him and his leaders. A grand banquet, given by the burghers in his honor, closed the day's festivities.

The next morning Höel advised the Prince not to indulge too long in entertainments, nor revel in fancied security, but to hold a serious council of



war at once. Arthur thereupon summoned his leading knights to the great hall of the palace, where he also appeared, accompanied by the bishop. As he ascended the steps to the throne seat and took his place, he was truly regal in person and bearing. Though he wore a simple duke's cap, he bore himself with as much dignity as if it were a kingly crown. Looking around upon the assembly with an air of ease and self-possession, he said: "Noble knights and gentlemen, thanks for your readiness and goodwill in coming to my assistance against John, my usurping uncle. I ask for your advice as to the most effective method of attacking him. One hundred knights and their followers are here, and in a few days a like number will be sent us from our loyal Brittany. But, hardly three days' journey from here, John has thrice that number of experienced troops. It would be useless to cope with such a powerful force before King Philip's troops join us. That will be soon. If you agree with me, we will await the King's arrival here."

Arthur ceased, and the knights began making suggestions. Höel, the most experienced of them all, supported his proposal, but the knights of Anjou and Poitou were not in favor of delay. In



the midst of the general indecision, one of the foremost of them, the Count of Aubigny, advanced and said : " Duke, permit me to state my plan. Instead of idly awaiting King Philip here, let us make an advance movement. Not far from here is the small fortress of Mirabeau, where Queen Eleanor and her garrison are shut in."

" Eleanor! " muttered Arthur, with lowering brows and blazing eyes.

" The city is poorly defended," continued the Count, " though it has for its champion William Longsword, Earl of Salisbury. But we have captured two letters from the Queen to John, in which she urgently implores him to come to her relief, as they cannot hold the city in case of attack. What is your decision, noble gentlemen? Shall we march to Mirabeau, surprise the fortress, and take the Queen prisoner? "

The hazardous proposition met with the approval of the majority, notwithstanding Höel's protests and Arthur's advice to wait a day or two for news from King Philip. They were outvoted, and at last reluctantly consented rather than subject themselves to the reproach of cowardice.

A few days later, Arthur and his small force





reached the walls of Mirabeau. Höel was assigned to the leadership of the assault, and strove to conduct the undertaking, which he could not prevent, as judiciously as possible. The city gates were forced open, and after a short struggle the assailants advanced into the city. But a more difficult task awaited them — the capture of the citadel in which Queen Eleanor and her defenders were sheltered. Höel vainly sought to mass his force and storm the fortress. While Arthur and Alan advanced with their close-set column of knights, the others were straggling about the city in quest of plunder. As Höel with his trusty band approached the citadel tower, he was struck by a missile hurled from the roof. Höel fell, and the rest stood as if rooted to the spot. The English took advantage of the occurrence to make a sally from the tower and threw the ranks of the knights into dire confusion. Instead of regular battle a fearful hand-to-hand encounter ensued ; but Arthur had time enough when Höel fell to order the nearest knights to dismount and remove him from the scene of the fighting. He then turned and commanded Alan to follow his father.

“Never more,” said Alan. “I must follow you as honor demands.”



There was no longer time for words. The advanced rank of the English was already upon them, and the young heroes stood with drawn swords ready to meet the onset.

"Sound an alarm!" shouted Arthur to the trumpeters, hoping thereby to summon the absent knights to their assistance. The call was in vain. Not a friend appeared. But hark! In the distance another trumpet blast answered his own.

"What is that?" exclaimed Arthur. But Alan was as ignorant of its meaning as himself. Suddenly a knight rode forward from the English side—a stalwart figure on a black steed, motioned his followers to halt, and pointing with his sword to Arthur, said: "Surrender, Duke of Brittany. Resistance is useless. The trumpet you have heard announces the approach of King John's army. Your confederates are defeated. You are surrounded, and retreat is cut off."

"Then I will fight for life and liberty like a true knight," replied Arthur. "I will never surrender myself to John." He rushed upon the knight, and Alan attacked another. Superior in skill and self-confidence, Arthur's adversary acted upon the defensive until the Duke's sword point touched



his breastplate. Upon this the English knight no longer restrained himself, but returned blow for blow and thrust for thrust. During the encounter Arthur's horse stumbled and fell, carrying his rider with him. He was on his feet in an instant, but the fastenings of his helmet were broken in the fall and the Duke's head was unprotected. The English knight did not take advantage of this, but lowered his sword and said: "You have fought bravely and can do no more, Duke of Brittany. Surrender."

"To whom?" said Arthur, also lowering his sword.

"To me, William Longsword, Earl of Salisbury."

"What!" cried Arthur bitterly, "a Plantagenet! How could you have the heart, cousin, to fight against Henry's nephew?"

He extended his sword. Salisbury took it, and, gazing at Arthur, said in a tone of utter astonishment: "By Heaven, his features prove the truth of his words. Geoffrey, as he was in life!" Then advancing, he said, "My prince and cousin, most unwillingly I take you prisoner, but you shall be a prisoner only in name."

"But how can you satisfactorily explain this to John?" asked Arthur.

"That can be arranged. You may think evil



of him, and unfortunately I cannot altogether defend his course, but he will not tarnish his knightly honor by abuse of a prisoner. Follow me, Duke Arthur, and rest assured I shall treat you with the utmost consideration."

The fighting paused while the two were conversing, and at last Salisbury gave the order for cessation of battle. But where were those young knights who had followed Arthur? Scattered, wounded, or captured, they were forced to declare themselves defeated, like their Duke.

Turning to Arthur, Salisbury asked, "What are your wishes with regard to your followers?"

"I hope, noble Salisbury, you will arrange matters so that at the close of the war they may be ransomed and return to their homes. Above all, care for the Knight Mordant. He fell at the very outset —"

"What!" interposed Salisbury, with the utmost emotion. "My old companion in arms fallen!"

"And this is his son," said Arthur, taking Alan by the hand. "Permit him to attend his father or bury his body."

Without hesitation Salisbury replied: "He shall go free, and keep his steed and weapons, if he will



THE WAR WITH JOHN



give his promise not to fight against England for a year."

A stir among those standing near them diverted the attention of the speakers. Six soldiers came in sight bearing the body of Knight Höel Mordant prone upon their lances. With a despairing cry Alan bent over the body, the warriors also showing signs of sorrow at the loss of the hero. At last Alan rose and said with trembling voice: "I no longer desire my liberty. Let me remain with my Duke."

But Arthur answered: "For my sake, Alan, accept the Earl's offer. Hasten to my wife and mother and urge my friends to send a ransom to John, that I may be released. Take this ring. You know who gave it to me. He has the power to help me." Arthur took Abraham's ring from his finger and placed it upon Alan's. When Alan would have offered objection, Arthur said for the first time in a tone of command, "I wish it." As his loyal friend sorrowfully bowed in submission, Arthur stretched out his arms and embraced him. They remained thus until Alan looked upon Arthur with sad eyes and tore himself away.

At Salisbury's signal his men escorted him and



the Duke to the gate of the tower, in front of which guards were stationed with crossed halberds. As they approached, the guards lowered their weapons and admitted them. Out of the brilliant glow of the evening sky Arthur entered the gloom of the vaulted passage. Salisbury quickly followed him, and the Duke of Brittany was a prisoner.

Alan remained immovable upon his steed as long as he could see a trace of Arthur's retreating figure, but when it disappeared behind the dark walls, he gave spurs to his horse and galloped at full speed through the city and out into the country toward Paris.

Chapter XVII

The Imprisonment

SEVERAL days had passed since Arthur entered the tower of Mirabeau, where by Salisbury's orders a large and well-furnished room was provided for him. He not only had all the necessities for comfort, but much personal pleasure, for famous English visitors to Mirabeau were permitted to call upon him. Whenever he appeared upon the walls in the company of an attendant, the soldiers of the garrison hastened to see him. He greeted them in such a cordial yet dignified manner that many a hearty benediction was uttered by them.

Salisbury himself visited him almost daily, and manifested the utmost concern for the welfare of his famous cousin. Upon such occasions Arthur frequently spoke of England and indulged in fancies of what he would do if he were King.

"Silence," said Salisbury, with a smile. "I must not listen. You are talking high treason."



At the very outset of his imprisonment Arthur had longed for an interview with his grandmother, Queen Eleanor. She declined seeing him, however, until she had ascertained John's intentions. But just at this time she had a letter from her son, in which he wrote: "I shall be with you in a few days. Having performed all your duties to the Prince hitherto, see to it in some way that he is harmless in the future."

The Queen clearly understood the double meaning of his words and considered the best means for carrying out his wishes. One day she abruptly said to Salisbury, "Bring your prisoner to me in the morning." As he hesitated about replying, she added in the most insolent manner, "I hear continually about your intercourse with the Duke, and it does not please me, my lord."

"By my long sword," replied Salisbury impetuously, "I would rather be the object of your suspicion than have you cause the Prince to suffer."

"Is he really as captivating as that?" said Eleanor, changing her tone. "I notice the people take no pains to conceal their admiration of his fine face and knightly bearing."

"He is — and you may as well know it," replied



Salisbury — “he is a Plantagenet from head to foot ; and those who doubt it, or seek to make others doubt it, have malicious designs.”

“When we have recognized him as a Plantagenet and our grandson, it will be time to award him his proper rank. We will see him in the morning.”

Salisbury looked sharply at the Queen, as if to discover her purpose, but one of his honest, straightforward nature could not read this crafty woman. He determined, however, to watch over Arthur with increased vigilance, for — and the reason he could hardly explain himself — the youth had won his love and devotion.

While Arthur was attending mass the next morning with Salisbury, the Queen was arranging for the interview with the son of the hated Constance in her apartment. Two soldiers of the royal bodyguard submissively received her orders. As she sat at a table covered with papers and writing materials she heard the gong strike the hour which marked the close of the morning service.

“Step behind those doors,” she said to the soldiers, “and await this signal. As soon as you hear me strike that metal cup with this silver key, enter, overpower and bind the prisoner, then do

what I shall order. But hold! Before you go, make a hotter fire in that brazier so that the irons may be heated — now, go.”

The guard disappeared behind the door, and Eleanor, gazing fixedly at the irons in the coals, said to herself: “‘Let him be made harmless in the future,’ John says; well, a blind man is harmless enough. He will not fascinate people when he has lost his sight. A blind king never can rule over England.”

Steps were heard in the passage leading to the apartment, and as the Queen turned her head, she saw Arthur and Salisbury entering. Arthur stopped a moment, awaiting a greeting from the Queen, who sat in silence. As he approached her and she observed his noble figure and beautiful face, she suddenly rose and put out her hands as if to keep him off.

“Will you send me away? Will you not speak to your grandson?” said Arthur reproachfully.

“My grandson!” said Eleanor, with her eyes bent upon him. “No — my son — Geoffrey.”

“Yes,” said Salisbury, “one might fancy Geoffrey had come back to life.”

“Oh! that it were so, if it would only give me
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his mother's love!" exclaimed Arthur, kneeling and taking the Queen's hand.

"Do not recall him," replied Eleanor passionately. "Geoffrey scorned his mother's love. I loved him better than any of my sons, and he gave his heart to Constance of Brittany, whom I detest."

"You speak of my mother," quickly replied Arthur. "Oh, she is good and noble. What has she done that you should hate her so?"

"What has she done?" replied Eleanor. "She alienated my son from me. He no longer loved me. He no longer listened to my advice. He was disloyal."

"Was your advice always sound?" asked Salisbury, with great earnestness. "Be fair, Queen. Remember, it was your advice that led Geoffrey into rebellion against his king and father."

"No more of that, Salisbury," interposed Eleanor.

"No," resumed Arthur. "Let bygones be bygones. Be reconciled to my mother. I will love you both, if you will only permit it, grandmother."

There was deep emotion in his supplicating tone and looks, and Eleanor was touched by it. She



stood for a moment reflecting; then, turning to Salisbury, she said, "Leave us."

Salisbury withdrew slowly and reluctantly, but ready to return at the first summons. Eleanor looked earnestly at the Duke as she said: "Listen, Arthur. I am old, but I am still capable of love and of hatred. I could love you, image of my favorite son, and so exalt you that you would never need again to wear Philip's armor. If I so wish, John will choose you as his successor, and will so engage upon his kingly honor. John must obey my wishes and the consent of all England will follow. I can give you the crown. I now proffer it to you, but upon one condition."

"And what is that?" asked Arthur with trembling voice.

"You must accompany me to England and cut loose from all you leave in France. The Pope will dissolve your union with the Princess Marie. You must declare war against Philip Augustus."

"And my mother?"

"You must leave her to her fate."

"Never!" cried Arthur. "Oh, you are heartless, grandmother. If I thought my heart was capable of such wickedness, I would tear it out of my breast."



"Once more I leave you free to make a decision. Choose," said Eleanor.

"I never will choose disgrace!" exclaimed Arthur.

Eleanor stepped to the table and took the silver key from the metal cup. As she raised her hand to strike, her gaze fell upon Arthur's eyes, which were glistening as if he were inspired. "No," she muttered, "I cannot do it. They are Geoffrey's eyes." The key fell upon the soft carpet from her helpless hand. "Leave me," she said. "Let us never see each other again in this life." She placed her hands upon Arthur's shoulders and looked at him long and earnestly. Then she sadly withdrew them and turned away. Arthur hurried from the apartment and met Salisbury, who had been waiting for him at the threshold. When Eleanor found she was alone, she stamped her foot and summoned the guards. "Take that away," she said, pointing to the brazier; "the fire is dead."

During Arthur's visit to the Queen, reports of the interview and of Eleanor's evil designs against her grandson spread through the city. There was great excitement, and open threats were made against her. As Arthur mounted the stairs with



THE DUKE OF BRITTANY



Salisbury he was greeted with loud applause by soldiers and knights in the castle yard. "Here he is," shouted those nearest him. "He lives," said others, and suddenly all joined in the enthusiastic cry, "Long live Arthur Plantagenet!" The Duke, overcome with surprise, waved his hand and thanked them. Then he followed Salisbury, who made a passage for him through the crowd with some difficulty. The shouts were audible in the apartment of the Queen, where, concealed behind a curtain, she was watching the throng below.

The dangerous excitement hastened her decision to deliver Arthur to the King. She might possibly have changed her intentions had not John entered Mirabeau that same evening with his army. As soon as he was alone with his mother, he inquired about Arthur, and broke into a fury of passion when he found that nothing had happened to the prisoner. His rage increased when he learned of the favorable impression his nephew had made upon the English troops and that Eleanor herself had shown a disposition to sympathize with him. "How is it," he cried, "that I find you negotiating with Arthur, especially when unexpected events have thrown him into my power? Are you



helping him, mother? Go, go! You have grown old and weak. I care nothing for his adherence to my cause or for Philip's assistance. Possession and right are on my side."

"The right!" replied Eleanor. "Ask your conscience in what manner King Henry's will gave you that right."

"Silence," said John. "I know that I am indebted to your cunning; but still you must remain loyal to me."

"I know that," replied Eleanor, "but listen to my advice."

"Enough for the present," said John. "We will think about the matter to-morrow morning, mother."

Arthur had passed the day alone, as neither Salisbury nor any of the knights had been to see him. About dark the watch, who came every evening to see that all was well, entered his room. Contrary to his usual custom he greeted Arthur curtly and was about to retire. Thereupon Arthur said to him, "How is it, Captain Norbert, that you have nothing to tell me to-day? You usually bring me some news."

"News is not always good news, gracious Prince," replied the captain significantly.



“Do you mean not good for me? What is it? Explain,” said Arthur.

The captain approached nearer and said in a low voice, “King John, your uncle, has arrived,” upon which he left so suddenly that Arthur could not question him further.

The intelligence weighed heavily upon him. Up to this time he had supposed that imprisonment, longer or shorter, would be the worst that could happen to him, but now he felt a misgiving that John would make a final decision as to his fate, and the hopelessness of the situation depressed his usually cheerful nature. With ardent longing he yearned to see his mother, Marie, and Alan; at last, overcome with sorrow, he wept bitter tears.

Chapter XVIII

King John

N the following day John summoned the leading nobles and commanders who had accompanied him to France to the great hall of the old castle of Mirabeau. Besides famous Salisbury, Lords Pembroke, Bigot, and Essex were in attendance, as well as knights and leading personages in great number. All awaited the Duke of Brittany with eager interest. They had heard so much about him since their arrival that many of them were greatly surprised and had besieged Salisbury with questions. Meanwhile Salisbury himself had not ventured to see the Duke, as the King had issued stringent orders that no one should be admitted to him. Arthur now realized that his fate was in John's hands, and he was filled with fear and solicitude. He showed no traces of it, however, when he appeared in the hall attended by an armed escort. He was in his best apparel, which had been kept for him by Salisbury.



Over a violet silk doublet he wore a short, gold-embroidered mantle of white satin and a scarf with the arms of the Plantagenets on it. Only the sword was lacking to complete the attire of knighthood. With a firm step and erect head he went directly in front of the King's seat, bowed respectfully, lifting his cap and replacing it immediately, as was the right of one of equal birth. Then he looked about quietly upon the assemblage. The impression which he made is almost indescribable. Many remembered to have seen him with King Richard in Rouen and recalled the favor which his uncle had shown him. Others, who had never seen him, recognized with great emotion Duke Geoffrey's face and figure reflected in his son. John also had observed the likeness, and it greatly disquieted him. A rustle and low murmurs were heard all over the hall until John spoke, and then deep silence prevailed.

"It is not our fault, my nephew," said he, "that I am receiving you here. It would not have been so had you accepted my invitation."

"Your invitation, uncle?" replied Arthur, not addressing him by his royal title. "I know of no invitation except the one to surrender which your troops sent to our cities."

"Well," replied John with a show of irritation, "your mother, instead of applying to her husband's family for protection, besought it of Philip Augustus, King of France."

"And why was Geoffrey's widow forced to seek for outside help, except that her legitimate protectors had become her enemies? No, my uncle, you cannot justify what has happened, but you can make reparation."

"What do you mean?" said John.

"You well know my claims," replied Arthur.

"And I scorn them," said the King menacingly. "Bethink you. You are a prisoner. You should be more moderate of speech."

"Imprisonment cannot make wrong right. It is more likely to add new wrongs to old ones."

"Silence," thundered John. "How does a mere worm, whom I can trample under my feet, dare to be so bold?"

Arthur's hand involuntarily sought his missing sword. Blazing with anger, he exclaimed: "Shame upon you thus to abuse and threaten a prisoner! Even if you despise the ties of relationship, at least honor the obligations of knighthood, to which we both belong." The knights present loudly



applauded these words, occasioning much confusion. Thereupon John, chagrined as he realized he had gone too far, quietly observed: "I am the best judge of what is becoming to knighthood. The honor of the King stands higher still. You may retire, Duke Arthur."

The King beckoned to the guards and Arthur was led away, taking with him the unmistakable sympathy of all present.

"You have heard, my lords, how this prisoner defies me," resumed the King. A pause followed these words, and lasted until Salisbury came forward and said: "The Duke spoke the truth; and as it was youthful impulse which actuated him, I think, and many others with me, that he had sufficient excuse."

"Lords Pembroke and Bigot, is that your opinion?" said the King.

Venerable Lord Pembroke calmly replied: "If the grade of kinship alone entitled him to the succession, Arthur would have the legitimate claim from his father, Geoffrey, your eldest brother. Nay, King, do not interrupt. Hear me out. We, the lords of England, recognized you as King after Richard's death, though well aware that a nearer



heir was living. But when we elevated you to the throne we took into consideration not alone the question of inheritance, but the welfare of England. The fearful struggle after the first Henry's death, in which rivers of blood were shed, to decide who should wear the crown, is still fresh in the minds of the people. Civil war must not again devastate the country; and yet I most earnestly warn you to treat your nephew, Arthur of Brittany, with the consideration due to his rank, to honor him in knightly fashion, and to give him back his dukedom unimpaired. Promise me this, O King, and receive anew our loyal devotion. Do you endorse my proposal, noble lords?"

The convincing importance of his statement, as well as the imposing presence of Lord Pembroke, made a profound impression, and all raised their hands in assent.

John looked around the circle in a triumphant manner and said in a conciliatory tone: "I give the promise which you desire unconditionally, my loving and trusty followers. I am pained that you should have believed I would not deal with my nephew as becomes his rank, even without a promise."

All were, or at least seemed to be, satisfied with



the King's statement. Salisbury, however, still was suspicious of John's sincerity. He asked permission to visit the prisoner again. The King smilingly granted it, saying: "Go to him to-day, noble Earl, for you must leave with a detachment of troops in the morning."

Salisbury made no objection to this, for he did not know that not only he, but all the nobles who had shown favor toward Arthur, would be sent away, and that the Duke would be left behind in the King's power. He was detained so long by the King upon business matters and friendly pretences that little time was left for him to make the visit; but at last he got away, and hurried to the prison. The joy with which Arthur greeted him made it all the more difficult for the Earl to prepare him for the approaching separation. When the Duke learned the King's intention, he lost his self-control and entreated Salisbury not to leave him. Vainly the Earl assured him that John had bound himself by a sacred promise that he would do nothing to harm his nephew. He clung to his only friend as he sought to tear himself away, crying out in utter despair, "My last hope departs with you, noble Salisbury."

In great agitation Salisbury left the unfortunate youth, and the next day marched out of Mirabeau, filled with gloomy apprehensions and wishing that he had never entered it and taken Arthur prisoner.

In a few weeks the relations of those who had met in Mirabeau were radically changed. Queen Eleanor had to remain there alone, though very reluctantly, as she was detained by a severe illness. It seemed as if the sight of Arthur's face had aroused the torments of conscience, for, from the day when she was forced to deliver him into John's power she had grown weak and ill, both in body and mind. As soon as he could make the arrangements John left Mirabeau, taking his nephew with him. Though closely guarded, Arthur enjoyed considerable freedom on the road, and followed the army on horseback. But before they were out of Normandy the prisoner's guards suddenly took him away in another direction from that of the army, and landed him in the castle of Falaise.

In that gloomy castle Arthur experienced all the hardships of imprisonment and passed his days in hopeless solitude. At the beginning of winter he was taken to Rouen and confined in a strong tower on the bank of the Seine. Though joyous and



cheerful by nature, he lost all courage and hope, and fell into utter despair. His young days seemed like a dream, and as he recalled them he asked himself over and over again, "What has become of Alan?"

The time which seemed so long to Arthur was passed by Alan in almost constant toil and hardship. How many dangers, plots, and delays he had to overcome before he finally reached Paris! He entered upon his mission for Arthur at once, but it was soon apparent that the task was hopeless. Where could he look for advice and assistance? King Philip being far away with his army, Alan was powerless to carry out Arthur's wishes, and yet the Princesses were expecting aid from him. He visited Abraham, who remained steadfast to the Duke; yet the Jew required time to raise the money and make inquiries just when Alan had to face new dangers at every turn. When Abraham learned from his relatives that Arthur had left Rouen, his alarm increased, for he feared the worst if he met John. The utmost despatch was now necessary, and Abraham showed his willingness to help Alan in his plans for the Duke's rescue. "For," said the Jew, "he has done me a great favor and has made an asylum for my people. But, alas, King John persecutes the



children of Israel, and has sworn to extirpate our race."

Alan advised with Abraham about every move he made, and finally decided to repair at once to the neighborhood of the Duke; then he arranged to meet Abraham in Rouen and decide what further steps were necessary in Arthur's behalf.

Chapter XIX

The Tower of Rouen

THE Duke's only recreation was an occasional visit to the tower balcony, where —under the eye of his guard— he enjoyed walking, as well as the bracing winter air. A high parapet prevented him from looking down where the Seine flowed by and vessels were passing up and down the river, but he could hear the voices and songs of the sailors as he paced backward and forward. He endeavored to maintain a dignified bearing when in the presence of the witnesses of his misfortune, but his pale cheeks showed traces of the bitter tears he had shed in his solitude.

One morning he went to the balcony as usual with Hubert de Burgh, captain of the guard. The wind blew violently about the old tower, and as Arthur went out on the balcony to listen to the stir of the world below, Hubert, who was in a surly mood, sheltered himself near the entrance.

As Arthur listened to the songs of the sailors on the river below, why was it that his face suddenly



lit up with joy and that his eyes flashed with delight? Fortunately Hubert could not see his face, as Arthur was standing with his back to him.

What was the melody to which he listened so eagerly? Surely it was Blondel's song,¹ which the faithful minstrel once sung under the walls of the prison where Richard the Lion-hearted was confined, and which Arthur had often sung with Alan, little dreaming that he too would be a prisoner one day. If his ear did not deceive him it was Alan's voice, only it was weaker and more tremulous than usual. And yet no other could sing the song like that. He longed to sing it in reply, but his guard, wondering why he stopped his walk so long, approached. The singer ceased as Arthur wiped his heated brow. Suddenly his handkerchief flew into the air. Arthur pretended to be catching it, but it fluttered high above the balcony and then sank downwards like a white dove.

"You have lost your handkerchief," said the guard, "for it will either fall into the water or catch upon the walls."

¹ Blondel was a *trouvère*, or minstrel, who accompanied Richard the Lion-hearted, and is said to have discovered him when he was imprisoned by singing a song under the King's tower, to which Richard responded,



"It was very precious to me," replied Arthur; "my mother embroidered it." Thereupon he left the balcony. The handkerchief fell into the water and was picked up by a young sailor boy, who came there on a stone vessel the day before. It was this boy who had sung Blondel's song. He took the wet handkerchief and looked at it with beaming eyes. Then he uttered a cry, not like that of a sailor, but like that with which the hunter calls his falcon.

On the following morning two weary female pilgrims arrived at the eastern gate of Rouen. When questioned by the guard, they showed letters to the Abbess of the Marien Convent, and were directed to the place. After kneeling in prayer for some time at the altar of the cathedral near by, they arose and went to the convent. As the elder pilgrim desired to present the letters in person, they were shown into the reception-room, where the Abbess awaited them behind a latticed door. Approaching it the pilgrim said, "Admit us, reverend mother."

"Do you not know that only the King and the Princesses have that privilege?" replied the Abbess. Thereupon the two unveiled.

"I am Constance of Brittany," said the elder.



“And I am Marie of France,” added the other in a low voice.

The Abbess bowed in great surprise and admitted the pair. “What seek you, gracious Princesses?” said she.

“We have vowed to tarry here in prayer until the Holy Mother of God answers our petition,” was the reply.

“And supposing the Holy One refuses?”

“Then we shall pray for a poor soul until our latest breath.”

“It is your right to command,” said the Abbess, conducting them to the interior of the cloister.

In that very hour an aged Jew came to the south gate of the city with a ragbag on his shoulder and a staff in his hand. He exhibited his passports to the gate-keepers, and although they gave him permission to leave Paris and go to Rouen on business, he was stopped and insulted upon every sort of pretext. He bore the raillery of the rough soldiers patiently and mutely, only protesting now and then, “My papers permit me to enter the city and seek lodgings with my friends.”

“But why are you in such a hurry, Jew?” said the captain. “Perhaps you have business



with the King of England, who is coming to-night? ”

The Jew shot a swift glance at the speaker and meekly replied, “ A poor craftsman can have nothing to do with so fine a gentleman.”

“ Who can tell? ” provokingly answered the captain. “ When princes are preparing to cross the seas there are fine bargains to be made with their followers.”

“ Then let me enter and find out if I can make any of them.”

“ The Jew snaps at such a chance like a fish at the bait,” said the captain with a sneer. “ Now hurry, son of Israel.”

The Jew promptly availed himself of the opportunity, folded his papers, and passed through the partly open gate. A soldier of the watch hurried him on his way with a thrust of his lance shaft, and the spare figure soon disappeared among the crooked old streets. The Jew, who was Abraham, had at last accomplished his purpose. In the secret hiding-place of one of his own faith he could have interviews with all kinds of people, who passed in and out all day. Samples of wares were strewn about the tables; but these people, who were



mostly knights or seamen, did not come to purchase. Among them was Alan, who late one evening found himself alone with Abraham.

“You know all now. I may not be able to help you further,” said Abraham. “But this is my plan: When King John comes into port, bringing the Duke with him, a second boat will follow, carrying the servants and baggage. The captain and crew have been won over. God knows at what price,” he added with a groan. “They will keep you until the harbor is reached. Then the King and his retinue, including Duke Arthur, will embark upon a large sea vessel, for the King will not allow him to be out of his sight until he safely lands him in England. The confusion of the night embarkation will allow you to approach unobserved, and you must improve the opportunity to separate the Duke from the others and get him to your boat. Have him concealed there, and leave as quickly as possible. It is the last faint possibility of escape, for no power can save him or get him out of the tower, now that John has control.”

“And where will the sailors in the little boat take us?” said Alan.

“They know all the coves and inlets of the coast

—they often conceal themselves in them from the pirates,” said Abraham.

“God grant that we succeed! Arthur knows that I am near, and he will be in readiness for instant flight. This is the surety of it,” said Alan, pressing Arthur’s handkerchief to his lips.

“Farewell, brave youth,” said Abraham. “Do what your heart prompts. A truer one never beat under the sun. I shall leave Rouen early to-morrow morning and return to Paris that suspicion may not fall upon me and my people should your undertaking be discovered.”

They parted, and Alan returned to the vessel. His route led him past the ancient tower, which was not so quiet and dark as usual. Torches illuminated the gate and battlements, and lights shone in the windows; for King John had arrived, and the din of his soldiery could be heard even through the thick walls.

Chapter XX

On the Seine

THE report of the King's approaching departure had attracted a great throng of spectators to the bank of the Seine, opposite the tower. They were curious to see the King, but more eager to see the Duke of Brittany, whose name was heard on every side. Vessels of moderate size could come close up to the gates on the water side, which closed the entrance to the tower. Two boats were in waiting some distance off. The smaller was fully manned, and loaded with chests and bales, ready for departure. The deck of the larger, which floated the royal ensign, was empty, the crew being below.

It was late when the signal for leaving was given. The gates were opened, torch-bearers advanced and lighted the stairs, which were flanked by two rows of halberdiers. Between them, knights, soldiers, and nobles, with the Duke in their midst, descended. Arthur stopped upon the stair an instant, looking about as if in search of some one, but he



was quickly forced along to the gangway leading from the stairs to the boat. He and his guards had hardly stepped aboard when the King's approach was announced. John immediately appeared, mounted the deck, and disappeared below. The rowers struck out, the sails filled, and the vessel moved to the middle of the stream. The boat with the baggage followed a little distance away from it. A dark figure rose from time to time in the bows, eagerly scrutinizing the King's vessel. It was Alan in sailor's dress, on the lookout for Arthur. The deck of the other vessel, however, remained empty for some time. It gleamed white in the light of the rising moon; its masts and sails were sharply outlined against the clear night sky, and only the monotonous plash of oars broke the stillness. But when the city was left behind and the vessel was gliding along between the deserted banks of the rushing river, two figures appeared on deck and gradually proceeded to the stern, which was clearly visible to Alan. He could see it was the King and Arthur engaged in conversation, and could even distinctly hear some of their words. Arthur was in modest attire, and his short mantle was carelessly worn. King John was dressed in



THE assassination of Arthur

a broad dark cloak which left one arm free, and wore a fur-trimmed cap. The speakers stood some distance apart, but as the conversation continually grew louder, it was perfectly audible to Alan. The familiar sound of Arthur's voice deeply touched his heart, and he eagerly listened to its tones. Suddenly he heard the King's questioning voice full of sullen rage, and Arthur's loud, firm reply to him, "Never, never!" At the same time he saw the Duke with upturned face raise his hands to heaven in a supplicating manner. As Arthur stood thus, facing the King with unprotected breast, the latter sprang at him. A dagger gleamed in his hand, and like a flash he drove the blade into the Duke's heart. A dreadful cry followed, and was repeated by the echo of another voice. The King lifted the weapon and pierced his victim a second time. The dying youth staggered to the edge of the vessel and fell into the river. The King looked searchingly over the side and then flung the dagger into the stream.

Forgetting all caution, Alan leaned over in his boat, watching with horror-stricken eyes the crimsoned water in the wake of the King's vessel. A golden ringlet rose and glistened in the moonlight



for an instant ; then the waves closed over it, and it disappeared.

Proudly sailed the vessel bearing the King to its haven. Sunk and forever lost in the waters of the Seine was the Duke of Brittany.¹

¹ Hume accepts the following account of the murder as the most reliable : "John first removed him to the castle of Rouen ; and coming in a boat, during the night time, to that place, commanded Arthur to be brought forth to him. The young prince, aware of his danger, and now more subdued by the continuance of his misfortunes and by the approach of death, threw himself on his knees before his uncle and begged for mercy ; but the barbarous tyrant, making no reply, stabbed him with his own hands, and, fastening a stone to the dead body, threw it into the Seine."

Chapter XXI

The Accusation

KING JOHN murdered his nephew at night, unseen, as he supposed, by any human eye, and yet he was at once harassed by constant fear. He did not draw an easy breath until he landed upon the English coast and stood upon soil which had not been stained by his bloody deed. Almost as soon as the King's vessel arrived, rumor was busy, however, and hinted of the crime John had committed. Although the people submissively obeyed him, they looked upon him with suspicion, and at last accusations were made openly.

When John assembled the lords and peers for the first time, the venerable Pembroke, their mouth-piece, asked the King this question: "Where is Arthur, son of Geoffrey, the noble scion of the Plantagenets?"

The cowardly and conscience-stricken King sought to evade a reply, but he was besieged with a storm



of demands and accusations, and Pembroke reproached both himself and his friends because they had left Arthur in the cruel hands of his uncle.

The King at last answered in a rage: "The peers must first prove the act before they condemn me." An instant's silence ensued, for they could not provide the proofs; and John looked with insolent scorn at the embarrassed nobles. But before the King could follow up his opportunity, a herald entered the hall, announcing that an unknown knight, attended by squires and heralds, had brought a message for the King from Philip Augustus of France. It was an unfortunate time to receive the commission, but he did not dare to refuse audience to Philip's ambassador.

Preceded by a herald carrying a roll of parchment in his hand, with the royal seal appended, a knight in full black armor entered the hall. John was greatly agitated as he saw him approaching, and was still more alarmed when the knight raised his visor and displayed the stern features of a youthful face. It seemed to him for an instant that Arthur stood there to accuse him.

The stranger bowed haughtily to the King, and with exceeding courtesy to the nobles, and then



spoke: "In the name and by the authority of King Philip of France I summon you, John Plantagenet of Anjou, before the tribunal of your sovereign lord at Paris, to answer for the murder of your nephew, Duke Arthur of Brittany."

John stamped his foot with rage. "This is most presumptuous," he roared. "It will be time for Philip to sit in judgment on me when he has found some one to accuse me."

"Here I stand, Knight Alan of Mordant, from Brittany, as your accuser," said Alan. "I saw you commit the murder, and am ready to prove all the circumstances. Do you doubt my testimony?" he asked, as he saw John make a gesture of contempt. "Well then, behold this dagger." Alan drew the weapon from his cloak and held it toward the King. "Do you recognize your name and arms on the blade? It may well be rusty, for it has not only lain in the waters of the Seine three days, but also has been bathed in Arthur's blood. Do you deny it, King John? Do you shake your fist at me? If so, I will maintain the truth of my accusation by my knightly honor, and here I cast my glove into the circle of these noble knights. I summon him to mortal combat who will deny my accusation."



Alan threw down his glove and replaced the dagger in his cloak. The King looked around the circle of his gallant knights almost supplicatingly, but he saw only gloomy and lowering faces, and no one moved to take the glove from the floor. There was universal silence until the King summoned the herald, who took the glove into his keeping.

Notwithstanding his discomfiture, John craftily made a bold move to stem the tide of his fast failing cause. Turning to Alan, he said, "If we, as is likely, shall refuse to recognize the summons of Philip of France, what then?"

"In that case," said Alan, "King Philip will declare you, John of England, dispossessed of all your property and fiefs on French soil, and will immediately appropriate them."

"Let him attempt it!" shouted John in thundering tones. "Hear you, my lords and knights! Philip may execute this summons, but he will not strike me. He will strike at England and England's greatness. It is Philip's purpose to wrest from us the country which is the birthplace of our ancestors, the land whence sprang our knighthood, majestic Normandy, beautiful Anjou and Maine. That is the explanation of all his virtuous anger



over the death of the boy Arthur. What is that boy's life, what is my own life, provided England's greatness remain unimpaired? Which one of you, my knights, will hesitate when he is called upon to fight for English honor and English possessions?"

John looked around the assembly confident of victory, took the summons, tore it in two, and threw the pieces on the floor. "There is the answer you shall take to Philip of France, Knight Mordant, and you may leave England in three days. For that length of time you have the privileges of an ambassador."

With a firm step John left the hall, and the nobles followed him with unsettled convictions.

Chapter XXII

The End

THE English army invaded France again, only to meet with defeat. England lost both fame and possessions : Philip wrested the latter from her. The entire population of Brittany rushed to arms after Arthur's murder, and drove the enemy out of their country. Alan, their leader, continually roused them to resistance and incited them to avenge their murdered Duke. He would not tolerate any foreign ruler, and encouraged all classes to maintain their independence both against England and France. He demonstrated his patriotism and achieved victory, but at the cost of his life in defence of his fatherland.

Arthur was avenged. The contempt of all England, worse even than death to bear, was visited upon John when he returned from France. Detested by his subjects, mistrusted by the nobles, shamefully begging help from the Pope to keep his throne, his life came to an end in an era of turbulence. His lords, joining hands with the commons, extorted



from him that important concession of rights, Magna Charta,¹ and compelled this execrable despot to lay the foundations of the greatness of the English people. Old and worn out with sickness, believing himself poisoned, racked with remorse, harassed by rebellious leaders, John died in the midst of an insurrection.

The derisive epithet, "John Lackland," has branded him in history as a spurious and cruel sovereign. The figure of Arthur of Brittany, glorified in poetry, beautified with the immortal lustre of youth, stands out brightly against the dark background of those bloody days.²

¹ Magna Charta, the charter of English liberties, signed by John and his barons at Runnymede, June 15, 1215.

² Hume says of John: "Cowardice, inactivity, folly, levity, licentiousness, ingratitude, treachery, tyranny, and cruelty, — all these qualities appear too evidently in the several incidents of his life to give us room to suspect that the disagreeable picture has been anywise overcharged by the prejudices of the ancient historians."

Appendix

THE following is a chronological statement of the principal events treated of in this volume :

- 1133 Birth of Henry the Second.
- 1152 Henry marries Eleanor.
- 1157 Birth of Richard the First.
- 1158 Birth of Geoffrey.
- 1165 Birth of Philip Augustus of France.
- 1167 Birth of John, surnamed Lackland.
- 1180 Philip Augustus succeeds to the throne.
- 1186 Death of Geoffrey.
- 1187 Birth of Arthur, Duke of Brittany.
- 1189 Death of Henry the Second.
- 1189 Rebellion of Richard and John.
- 1189 Richard succeeds to the throne.
- 1189 Period of the Third Crusade.
- 1195 War between Philip Augustus and Richard.
- 1199 Death of Richard.
- 1203 Assassination of Arthur.
- 1216 Death of John.
- 1223 Death of Philip Augustus.

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